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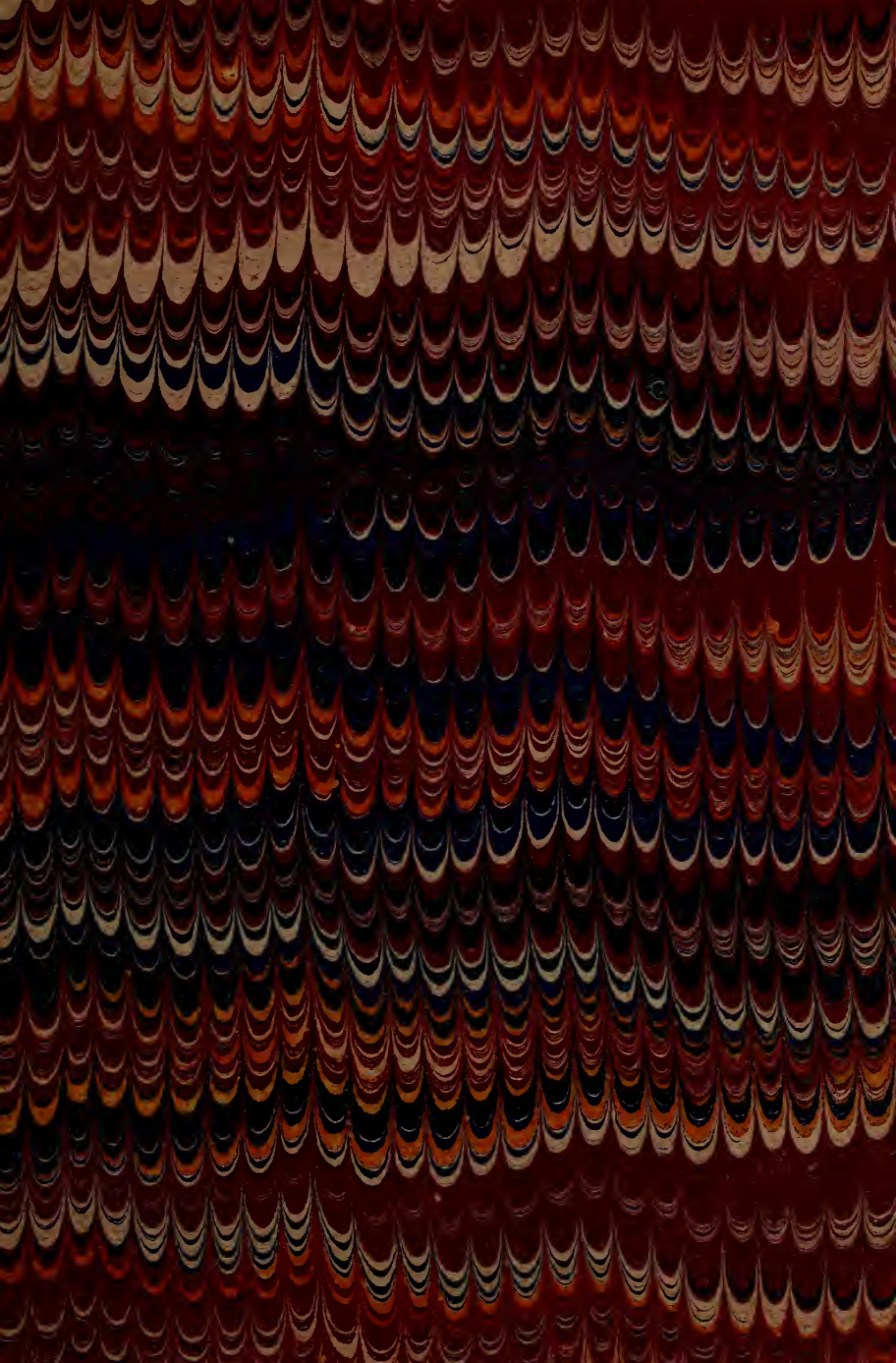

WORDS IN SEASON

FOR THE

INQUIRER

AND THE

INQUIRY MEETING.

"Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow."—Isa. 1:18.

"Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered."—Rom. 4:7.

"Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."—2 Tim. 2:15.

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PREFACE.

THIS is not a verbatim report of the several addresses, but is mainly a sketch exhibiting their salient points, as these could be caught up in notes written in the pew, and with an endeavor to preserve as much as possible the popular, off-hand style of their expression. This report is given in the conviction that some such presentation of the handling of the various themes by the master workmen, the wise soul-winners in the churches, would be of extended usefulness, wherever are found any who have a heart to work for Jesus, and also as direct counsel to those seeking Christ.

The circular call issued for the meetings is given herewith to make this little volume an historical memento of the spiritual preparation for the work of Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey in New York City.

JOS. H. BRADLEY.

LEBANON CHAPEL OF THE N. Y. CITY MISSION.

January, 1876.

[CIRCULAR.]

OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE,

HIPPODROME BUILDING,

N. W. COR. OF TWENTY-SIXTH STREET AND FOURTH AVENUE.

NEW YORK, *December* 30, 1875.

DEAR BROTHER:

The Advisory Committee has recommended that a series of meetings be held, to aid those who are to give instruction and counsel in the Inquiry-rooms, in making special preparation for their important duties.

The list of speakers and subjects will be found inclosed. The exercises will take place in the Reformed Church (Dr. Ormiston's), corner of Twenty-ninth Street and Fifth Avenue, at 7.30 p. m., on the Tuesday and Thursday evenings of January.

Will you kindly invite the members of your church, whose names you have sent in, as qualified and willing to take part in this work in the Inquiry-rooms, and all others who may be interested in the subject?

These services, if largely attended, will do much to call attention to the object of the proposed meetings to be conducted by Mr. Moody and Mr. Sankey, and may prepare hearts in all the churches for intelligent and effective co-operation.

It may be well to notice that Dr. Tyng (Senior) occupies the first evening alone. On each succeeding evening two addresses will be delivered.

Fraternally yours,

D. STUART DODGE,

Chairman of Inquiry-Room Committee.

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WORDS IN SEASON.

PREPARATION FOR THE WORK IN INQUIRY MEETINGS.

REV. S. H. TYNG, SR., D.D.

THEY who desire a preparation for usefulness in inquiry meetings, have need to feel that the work will go on by the might of the Lord, as His own doing among us. Therefore every detail in the matter of preparation is essentially worthy of our earnest attention, and the excellence of every step of that preparation is of vital importance; we should consider this ministry as appointed for the nursery of the babes in Christ Jesus.

I wish it understood that I emphatically indorse the work of Moody and Sankey, believing them to be valued instruments of the Lord, engaged in building up the kingdom of Christ. We are here to-night to assist in carrying out their designs. A long experi-

ence makes me esteem the work of these men as that of two servants of the Lord, specially raised up, and called as embassadors, as were Elijah and John the Baptist of old; and my desire and prayer is, that they may be completely sustained in doing that for which they are peculiarly qualified. There are some men who *can* do, and others who only are *willing* to do; these men are both *canning* and *willing* men, desiring thoroughly to serve God, and I have an anticipation of grand results following their labors.

The first grand requisite for success in the inquiry meeting, is that we must heartily believe in the reality of this work, and our gathering to-night is an expression of our personal sense of its reality, and of our desire to be closely connected with the work, in the prospect and sure hope of a great result.

Two classes of persons are particularly interested in these meetings: 1st, the new-born beings; and 2d, the class of faithful friends to sustain and encourage these new-born children of God.

The special elements of a wise preparation may be included in three general heads.

I. What are the persons with whom the work is to be done? II. What is the aim and matter of the guidance to be given? III. Who shall give this aim and guidance—what are the workers to be?

I. *What are the persons before us?* Inquirers. A divine description is afforded, Jeremiah 50: 4, 5: "In those days, and in that time, saith the Lord, the children of Israel shall come, they and the children of Judah together, going and weeping; they shall go, and seek the Lord their God. They shall ask the way to Zion with their faces thitherward, saying, Come and let us join our selves to the Lord in a perpetual covenant that shall not be forgotten." Here is a perfect description—of persons deeply impressed, entertaining an active purpose (going and seeking) in humbleness of heart (seeking guidance to Zion with faces thitherward), determined to belong to their redeeming Lord—to be His in perpetual covenant. Here the whole class of inquirers is set before us. Under the gospel dispensation another divine description has been given, as in the case of the Philippian jailor, and also in the cry of those awakened on the day of

Pentecost, "Men and brethren, what shall we do to be saved?" A picture of souls presented, really, directly aroused from the natural sleep and carelessness of the natural state of the human heart, to a sense of responsiblity and danger, a condition of ruin, and moved by a power impelling them onward, and which they cannot resist.

We may be assured that the means to effectually rescue the awakened is always provided by the God of all grace—grace never leaves any part of its work unfinished, or not fully sustained. The course of guidance is fully laid out.

But we need to be aware that every professed desire to find Jesus is not always of God. Of this we are warned in the words, "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God." (1 Jno. 4: 1.) There may come before you some who are deceitful: of such Jeremiah had experience, and having been deceived by them, he rebuked them, saying (Chap. 42: 20), "Ye dissembled in your hearts when ye sent me unto the Lord your God, saying pray for us," etc. Such experiences are not infrequent.

1st. What constitutes a real inquirer? It is one awakened and moved by the Spirit of the living God. With such an one the interest is of an abiding nature, that lasts, and is not a temporary impression; a deep feeling of need of salvation is exercised; such an one is assured that something must be done, and no wheedling of the world without can take away the feeling; the man recognizes himself in danger, and confesses to himself, "I am in a great crisis!" and his questions instead of being merely formal, come from his own individual, deep, spontaneous experience. The man's fervid impression is that his present condition is ruinous, and his anxious desire is "how to get out of it." Therefore search the reality and earnestness of the spirit with which you have to deal. Many before you may not be entirely insincere, but only superficially impressed, as is common in times of revival. Assure yourselves whether influence exhibited is of God or of man; whether of the Holy Spirit, or mere excitement and sympathetic. Much experience and wisdom is needed for successful work in the inquiry meeting.

2d. The Holy Spirit's work is marked by

deep conviction of personal guilt. A panorama of sin moves before the conscience, and the truth is recognized that there remains no goodness in the man. He is constrained to look in upon his secret heart, and back on a wasted life; he is a hideous object to his own view, and abhors himself in dust and ashes; he finds no excuse, nor defence, and judges himself vile; the tone of his expressions is, "I have sinned, and what shall I do?" He has a consciousness not only of sin, but also of guilt, and that he is under condemnation which is well deserved, a present condemnation, and that he must have an actual and absolute salvation, or be forever lost. The exact features of these convictions will be necessarily characterized by each individual's personal peculiarities, yet the marks of them will always be present in some shape, and it is yours to seek and expect to find these feelings.

3d. The marks of the genuine work of grace are indicated by the scripture, "When He, the Spirit of Truth, is come, He will convince the world of sin, because they believe not in me." Jesus so tells what objectively is the aim of the truth. No conviction of the sin of reject-

ing Jesus comes but by the Holy Ghost. ("The grand morality of the gospel is love to Jesus, and its reverse is the great sin.") We want to bring the inquirer face to face with this sin. You will find the sense of this sin overwhelmingly great in a truly awakened soul.

4th. The real inquirer will exhibit a longing for salvation, and a sense that he can never bear sin's penalty; and this is his cry: "Is there any salvation for such as I—will God save, forgive such a wretch!" His feelings will be like those of one lost in the desert, or alone upon a wreck in mid-ocean, or at the window of a burning building—so he will ask, "How can I be converted?"

These are not extreme cases, but normal examples of the Holy Spirit's work, drawn from my long experience of hundreds of cases.

II. *What is to be your personal aim in this guiding ministry?* What are you to do with these persons? What do you desire to do with, accomplish with, these acute, discriminating inquirers? Your ultimate, final purpose is to bring them to Christ, for a full, perfect salvation by a present, living union with Him.

You are not to be deceived, satisfied by the present views and convictions of those before you; you are not to take conviction of sin for the change of heart itself; for they may go down to death under only conviction, unwilling to accept the gospel offer, to submit themselves to the demand of obedience; especially may this be so with men of intelligence, men of business—they may go on for years in this condition. An inquiring mind is still an unbelieving mind, unsaved.

When you are asked, "What shall I do?" answer, "Believe!" The act of faith requires no delay, no time for consideration; the operation is not constituted of parts, but is one and indivisible, a single, instantaneous work. Every one is a believer or unbeliever; is in Christ or out of Christ. Mere awakening does not alter the condition; delay is continued disobedience and unbelief. You are not to stop to argue points, leave that to Christ; but you are kindly to remove obstacles out of the way, and lead the soul to an immediate acceptance of Christ. Do this as the Spirit gives you utterance.

You are to lead these souls to feelings of

godly sorrow, unselfish sorrow for the rejection of a long and patiently waiting Saviour, as He who has long stood without, His locks wet with the drops of the night while He has waited for them; a sorrow for the indignities laid on Jesus. Show them the love of a Saviour's heart, the fulness of His forgiveness, the sweetness of a Saviour's fellowship, till they come to the Prodigal's sensibility: "I am no more worthy to be called thy son." The Spirit will work with you to bring them to godly sorrow.

Show to them the completeness of the atonement, the fulness of the gracious pardon, washing their deep crimson white as snow. They are to receive the truth presented to them as the teaching of God, with no objections; as divine revelation; to adopt the salvation as theirs, and believe that they are as assured of pardon and justification as though they had never sinned. Tell them of Christ's perfect obedience for them, who by His righteousness "justifies many," that even the chief of sinners may be completely justified by faith in the blood; tell them to receive the Saviour as their Saviour, to trust to and in Him, as their

shelter, tabernacle, everlasting habitation, as the joy of their heart.

Urge them to an immediate, full, affectionate consecration of themselves to Christ, who has assumed their sin and condemnation, and to give themselves to Him a living sacrifice, His property, to His service, control, as the thank-offering of souls redeemed and living ever in Him.

[The lapse of time did not permit Dr. Tyng to dwell upon two other points, which he barely stated, viz.: THE MOTIVES WHICH *should control those who go into the inquiry-room*, and THE PECULIAR MODES *by which the Lord sustains workers.*]

"MUST I REPENT FIRST?"

REV. WILLIAM ORMISTON, D.D.

THE duty of conversing with those who are under deep concern about their souls is alike delicate and difficult, and should be performed always under a due sense of its solemn importance, with a true and tender sympathy with the inquirer, with unfaltering faith in the gospel, and in a spirit of prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit. The first qualification for this work is a genuine personal experience of the truth and power of the gospel; to this should be added a competent knowledge of the Scriptures, and some wisdom and tact in applying them.

The difficulties to be removed, the objections to be answered, and the states of mind to be dealt with, are as varied as the circumstances of the individuals who seek for counsel.

In many cases you will find a disposition not unlike that of the young man who came to Jesus anxiously asking, "What shall *I do* to inherit eternal life?" They desire to do something

to be better in some way, to commend themselves to the mercy of God.

Whatever be the peculiar difficulty in the mind of the inquirer, no direction should ever be given which contemplates his remaining another hour in unbelief. An immediate change is necessary—a change of mind and heart toward God. Hence the exhortation to *Repent*, as the immediate duty of every sinner, is so frequently and earnestly urged in Scripture. John the Baptist, in trumpet tones preached repentance to the multitudes by the banks of the Jordan. The great Teacher Himself came into Galilee preaching, saying, "Repent ye and believe the gospel." When Jesus sent out the twelve, they went forth preaching that men should repent; and in His last commission to His apostles, He declares that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations. Peter in Jerusalem, Paul in Athens and in Ephesus, proclaimed the same truth, that God commandeth all men everywhere to repent, and that Jesus is exalted a Prince and a Saviour to give repentance to Israel and the forgiveness of sins. (Math. 3: 2; 9: 13; Mk. 1: 15; 6: 12.

Luke 24: 47. Acts 2: 38; 3: 19; 17: 30; 20: 21; 5: 31).

When the question is asked, however, Must I repent *first?* the difficulty lies in the word *first*, implying something necessary to be done before receiving Christ. It were worse than useless to enter into any metaphysical discussion, as to the order of experience, or the states of mind through which a sinner passes in becoming a child of God, or to attempt to settle the priority of repentance and faith, or how the divine and human co-operate in the work of salvation. Better far to show what true repentance is, and enforce the obligation which rests on all immediately to repent. Doubtless every experienced Christian, who is able to discriminate in spiritual things, will see that the quickening by the Spirit precedes every right act of the sinner, and that some faith in the testimony of God concerning the evil and demerit of sin, and His readiness to pardon it, precedes repentance, otherwise the sinner would not feel the need of repentance, or have sufficient encouragement to repent; yet in the consciousness of the penitent, a deep sense of the guilt of sin, and bitter grief

on account of it, may be felt ere he believes in Jesus Christ for justification before God.

Evangelical repentance as inculcated in the Word, implies a turning from sin unto God through faith in His Son. Repentance and faith are inseparable in every truly awakened soul; we repent only when we believe, and we are conscious that we believe only when we repent. One has aptly said, "Repentance is the act of a believer, faith is the act of a penitent." Faith is turning to Christ, but in turning to Christ we turn from sin. The eye of the soul looking on our sins is repentance; looking on Christ is faith.

Never hesitate to urge a sinner to repent, as if you were asking him to do something before coming to Christ; for true repentance is just coming to Christ, and coming to Christ is one aspect of true repentance.

Be careful to distinguish between true repentance and that which is often mistaken for it, and which simply results from the workings of the natural conscience. There may be a sense of guilt, a feeling of remorse, and even a sorrowful confession of sin, and yet no real penitence. Pharaoh, Achan, Saul, and

Judas, each said, "I have sinned." Were mere regret and remorse, repentance, penitents were numerous indeed. A man's conscience may remonstrate, and, in view of the consequences of his sin, either felt or feared, he may grieve bitterly over his folly, yet there may be no turning to God, no apprehension of mercy, and only a repentance that needeth to be repented of. Repentance toward God is indispensable and necessary, yet it is by no means meritorious.

Some may say, I cannot repent, unless God grants me repentance. True, it is the gift of our exalted Redeemer, but it is not more distinctly stated as a gracious gift, than as a commanded duty. It is God's gift, yet none the less man's act. In all other departments of the divine operation, wherever man is a co-worker with God the same difficulty arises and the same principle holds. We truly say God gives a bountiful harvest, yet is it also the result of human industry. The hand of the diligent maketh rich, yet prosperity is of the Lord. So while we work out our salvation, God worketh in us both to will and to do. A skillful workman in spirit-

ual things states the truth very aptly. He says: "In spiritual operations God has His work and we have ours; as we cannot do God's work, He will not do ours; though we cannot do God's work we may pray to Him in reference to it; and though God will not do our work for us, we may, and must ask Him for grace to enable us to do it." God gives repentance, but it is the sinner who repents. The necessity of divine agency does not, and cannot, absolve from human responsibility. This may be fitly illustrated by the case of the man with the withered hand, or that of the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda, or that of the lame man at the gate called Beautiful (Mark 3:5; John 5:8; Acts 3:7). When the strength, in either case, was imparted we cannot tell, but the command was given and the power went with it, and in obedience, healing was obtained and manifested. So with the command to repent and believe, the grace is given. If we seek salvation, we must accept it on God's terms as a free gift. We must do what God enjoins, if we would enjoy what He promises. If the question is pressed, "Must I repent *first?*"

the right answer is, There is no *first* about the matter. Repent at once, and believe in Jesus. God summons you to repent; let your compliance be prompt and hearty. Wait not for the Spirit; He is with you now.

If any come to you, already burdened with a sense of sin, ready to sink into despair, point such at once to the Lamb of God who taketh away the sin of the world, and speak to them of the greatness of His love, the freeness of His grace, and the fullness of His salvation. Be very tender with the broken-hearted, and speak to them of the great Healer. Brethren, be wise in winning souls, and God give you many as a crown of rejoicing.

"MY SINS ARE TOO GREAT."

Rev. ROBT. RUSSELL BOOTH, D.D.

It is hardly possible for us to exaggerate the importance of suitable instruction to an inquirer, whatever may be the difficulties under which he is laboring. The magnitude of the interests which are at stake, the manifold temptations which beset him, and the subtle and intricate exercises of an anxious heart, all combine to require in him who undertakes such a work, a discretion and knowledge which shall be at least equal to his zeal. It was Dr. Nettleton's rule to say as little as possible to those who came to him for direction, beyond what he presented in the simple language of Scripture. It is very easy for us to make serious mistakes in undertaking this work, and thereby to turn away the eye which ought to be taught to look directly to the Lamb of God, who taketh away the sin of the world. We shall in some degree do this, whenever we attempt to make our own thoughts, ideas, experiences, or even theological views the standard of spiritual at-

tainments in others. If, like Christ, we wish to speak "with authority," and with persuasion, we must make our counsel the echo of some "Thus saith the Lord." And to secure proper adaptation in this, it would be well for us to keep in mind that striking illustration of ejaculatory prayer which is presented in the interview of Nehemiah with King Artaxerxes: "For what dost thou make request?" was the question. "So I prayed unto the God of Heaven, and I said unto the King." Now, in like cases, He who has promised to be wisdom and utterance to His disciples in all times of need, will aid us if we thus cast ourselves upon Him, asking Him to direct us as to the use of the right word in the right spirit. Then all that we say will be as "apples of gold in pictures of silver," and will be "profitable to direct." None but our Master can give us the wisdom we need in such cases. He that winneth souls must be wise by means of this dependence on Him.

The *difficulty* which is expressed in the phrase, "*My sins are too great*," is one which we are likely to meet very frequently. Sometimes it is carelessly or even flippantly utter-

ed, but in most instances it is spoken with a deep and sad sense of its meaning. Perhaps I shall serve you best by describing the personal experience out of which it proceeds, and then by pointing out the way in which it may be met, so that out of a due sense of its sin, the soul may see Jesus as its sin-bearer and refuge.

As to the cause of this feeling, we need to realize that it is grounded in a deep and terrible reality. This is presented to us in Romans 7:9: "For I was alive without the Law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died." The natural condition of the sinner is one of carelessness in his sin. "Alive without the Law;" conscious of his shortcomings; aware of his peril, and yet indifferent to both his guilt and his danger. But whenever the Law of God is applied to him by the Spirit, so that he realizes its claims and his own disobedience, the reaction is solemn, overwhelming, and often terrible. The sinner then sees himself a responsible being under the condemnation of a just and heart-searching God. Sinai's thunderings and lightnings are around him, and he knows not where to go for a refuge. He realizes sin for the first time in

his life, and he is dismayed. It is no wonder that in such conditions men often feel that their sins are "too great" for God's mercy. Simon Peter gave utterance to this feeling when he first came in contact with Christ (Luke 5 : 8), "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, oh, Lord!" Such, too, was the condition of Paul in those days in Damascus, when "he was three days without sight, and did neither eat nor drink." (Acts 9: 9–18.) Such, too, were those pentecostal experiences when multitudes were "pricked in their hearts," and cried out in alarm, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2 : 37.) It was a permanent characteristic of the New England revivals that they were attended by this deep conviction of sin; and while it is not a feeling which should be prolonged or augmented, I most seriously insist that it is not to be carelessly set aside as if it had no significance, but it should rather be regarded as the direct work of the Spirit of God in the heart. Striking out one single word from the sentence, the word "too"—"too great"—it expresses precisely the feeling which one must have, in order to possess any proper apprehension of Christ; and it is, more-

over, a feeling which will never leave him until grace is perfected in glory. We find this experience in Paul even at the close of his life. "Sinners, of whom I am chief." (I. Tim. 1:15.) Therefore, I conclude on this point by the earnest suggestion, that you should say nothing whatever to diminish the reality of this sense of sin, for it is the true preparation for a sense of the value of Christ as a Saviour of sinners. Only let it not be exaggerated to proportions which will induce anyone to despair of the grace of God freely offered to all who desire it.

In order to set this matter right in the consciousness of the inquirer, you must therefore be able to show him how sin—such sin as his—whatever it may be, is cancelled and pardoned in the salvation of Christ.

1st. As already intimated, let the conviction, "My sins are great," stand in the mind just as the Spirit of God has impressed it. You cannot do much to relieve it by any comforts of your devising. It is a reality which one ought to ponder. It is cause for tribulation and anguish. The sinner has need to feel that his sins are great.

2d. At the same time, try to make use of that sense of sin, as a motive to an instant surrender of soul to God. Feeling it to be right, let the convicted soul say, "I will arise, and go to my Father." "If I have done iniquity, I will do so no more." Whatever be the prospect or hope of acceptance, whatever be the attitude of God towards the sinner, surely it is his duty to give up his rebellion at once, and break off his iniquities by turning unto the Lord.

The language of Queen Esther, when she resolved to intercede for her people, expresses this purpose: "And so will I go in unto the king, which is not according to the Law, and if I perish, I perish." (Esther 4: 16.)

"I can but perish if I go,
I am resolved to try.
For if I stay away, I know
I must forever die."

3d. In connection with this demand for submission to God, do not fail to point always to the Lord Jesus Christ, who "came into the world to save sinners." Explain His mission, His relation to the broken Law, His work of expia-

tion on the cross. Repeat His precious invitations, present Him as the Saviour and the Friend of sinners. Bring into the foreground such cases as those of Bartimeus, Zacheus, the Magdalen, the dying thief, Saul of Tarsus. Enforce the grand assurance, "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Romans 5 : 1.) And when the convicted and submissive soul is thus brought face to face with Christ, you may be sure that Christ will do for him His work of grace, according to His word. "Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out." (John 6 : 37.)

"WHAT IS IT TO COME TO CHRIST?"

REV. JOHN HALL, D.D.

As guides to those seeking the truth we are under obligation to learn the best methods of stating the truth. And the truth we are to give is not something involved, intricate, something to be learned by long study. The best method by far is not to tell of the way, but tell of Christ, and so keep the substance of the whole matter before the souls of inquirers.

The "come" suggests something local, yet not a bodily, but mental progress, as when we use the expression, "coming to oneself," or, of "coming to an opinion," as purely a process of mind or spirit. It is to be assumed that in some sense they who shall be before us, already know of Christ, as they to whom John the Baptist said, "Behold the Lamb of God," meaning something more than the bodily form of Jesus. And when we get others to look at the person, and they see Christ, we find they have also come to the faith, have done more than merely look with the eyes. When one says to the cashier of a bank, "I have come to you with my money,"

we understand him to mean, that he intrusts his money. So men may have trusted in their Church, trusted in their own righteousness, which is but as filthy rags before God; the same idea of full confidence in the object of trust, is meant in trusting in Christ; and when we come to Christ, we say, "I trust all to Thee."

We are not to confound the figure with the truth which lies under it. We are not to take the sentiment, however strong, stirred by looking at the crucifixion, for the actual looking to Christ. We are looking to Christ when the mind is filled with scriptural ideas of Him, so that we take Him as the true and only Saviour.

The difficulty with some persons is, that they cannot see Christ as they do see the bank. This difficulty does not touch the question of the being of Christ. If there were no belief of Christ, then these souls would have none of the fears which distress them, but we show them their belief, appealing to their strong consciousness, by saying, "But you do fear; now fully believe the evident fact, and be at peace."

The practical error from which we need to warn the inquirer, is that coming to Christ is getting up an impetuous feeling. Faith in Christ is not a process of forcing oneself up to a certain pitch of feeling and excitement, and then having accomplished that, to be done with the whole business ever after; no more than marriage is a thing to have done, and then to be done with it. Coming to Christ is coming into loving, eternal union with the "chiefest among ten thousand," (Cant. 5 : 10), and this knowledge is necessary to the right coming.

Coming to Christ is done by the same process of mind as we exercise when we invest money by the advice of a wise financier; so the sinner seeks and receives testimony of the advantages of trusting all to the Son of God, of putting soul and body, for time and eternity, into His hands; and the value of the testimony which gives confidence in this spiritual deposit or investment will increase more and more to his apprehension; and it will become more and more evident to himself that he has come to Christ.

Let the advice of "coming" be not made

so much of as to hide Christ. Carry the sinner to the feet of the Saviour, tell him he is under the power of evil, and that King Immanuel is the only One who can grapple with that power and break the yoke of bondage, rescue him, and give him the children's liberty. Tell him that coming is a life-long process, and the whole refrain of Christian life is, "I need Thee every hour, most gracious Saviour."

A danger attends the revival season and its agencies, under which, by mere emotional effects, persons believe they have come to Christ, and then fall away, and back into their old condition, when the power invoking the feeling is gone. Wherefore we should be impressed with the responsibility of making plain the fact that "coming" is a daily work, and that we have need of coming to Christ, as our daily and constant wants, fears, and hopes arise. Try to keep this continually before the minds of those to whom you present Christ, that this truth may solidify and crystalize into the abiding substance of a godly life.

When any one shall say to you, "I do

not feel that I have come to Christ," turn their thoughts away from such introspection, and turn them again at once to Christ; do not go into the science of optics, but give the light, which will enforce a consciousness of spiritual seeing.

If any shall say, "It is so hard to come," show such that the Holy Spirit is given to enable men to come to Christ. Inquirers are given to looking within themselves, to watching for some miraculous testimony, experience of halcyon peace, and are not easily satisfied without it. But bring them to the fact that they must surrender themselves just as they are entirely to Christ; not to dwell upon the way of doing it, but to be sure only that they do the needful thing, make the surrender, wholly, heartily, and for ever, to live and be ever to the praise and glory of God.

"WHAT IS SAVING FAITH?"

WM. M. TAYLOR, D.D.

"FAITH," according to the apostle, "is the evidence of things not seen, the substance of things hoped for." It has to do, therefore, with things which are beyond the sphere of our own knowledge or observation, and it takes them to be real and substantial. But on what ground? The answer is, on that of the testimony of God regarding them. In its most general sense, faith is the belief of a testimony. In its Biblical sense, faith is the belief of that which the Bible contains, on the ground of confidence in God, whose testimony the Bible is. In its Christian sense, faith is only a particular instance of that Biblical faith. This Word of God tells us who Christ is, and assures us that He has done all that is required to secure our salvation, so that we need now only to depend upon Him; and we believe all that because God says it, and depend on Christ accordingly, and that is saving faith.

There are not two ways of believing. To believe always expresses the same precise act of the soul, which is the acceptance as true on the testimony of another of something which is beyond the reach of my observation or discovery. But in ordinary cases we believe a fellow-man because of what another man has said. In this case we believe in Jesus because of the testimony which God has given to Him.

Is, then, faith a mere intellectual act? The answer is, that will depend on the nature of the truth believed. If it is an abstract proposition, then my faith in it will affect only the intellectual part of my nature; but if it be something that affects me personally, and be seen and believed by me so to do, then it is impossible that my faith should not go down into the depths of my being and pervade my soul. Whenever, therefore, a faith which professes to believe the Bible is a merely speculative thing, you may be sure that the full truth is not believed. If a man say he believes the Bible and continues in sin, then the Bible in his view must be a very different book from what it really is, and that amounts to saying that he is not really believing the

Bible. It comes then just to this, that provided we believe the right thing, we need not concern ourselves about our manner of believing it, for as one has admirably put it, "the true belief is the belief of the truth," and in the line of his statement we may add that saving faith is faith *in Christ*.

Faith differs from sight. Both, indeed, are the belief of a testimony; but sight is the belief of the testimony of my own senses, faith is belief in the testimony of another, and in its Biblical sense confidence in the testimony of God.

It differs also from reason, which may be called the sight of the mind. If we follow reason alone, we are trusting simply to our own faculties, but faith is confidence in God. Yet faith is not irrational. The province of reason is to examine into the evidence for the divine authority of the Scriptures, and if that be found conclusive, it hands the book over to be held by faith. Again, the province of reason is to find out the meaning of revelation, for God speaks to man as an intelligent being; but when the meaning is discovered, reason hands it over for the acceptance of faith. It matters not, though some of the things re-

vealed may be above our comprehension; if we are only satisfied that they are attested by God, reason bids us receive them; even as Martha was prepared to receive anything which the Master said, though she was evidently quite at a loss to understand what He meant when He said, "I am the Resurrection and the Life."

The influence of faith is seen in the fact that it relieves the mind from all perplexity or doubt, and the heart from all anxiety, as to unseen and eternal things. It is, as one has said, "the repose of the intellect and the repose of the affections." It believes God's word and "stays quiet." God has testified that the blood of Jesus Christ His Son "cleanseth from all sin." The sinner believes that, and as a consequence looks for salvation only through the atoning death of Christ. If he has been seeking salvation in other ways he gives over all such attempts and *rests* in Christ. There are thus just two steps in the process—the belief in the Father's testimony regarding Christ, and the resting quietly in Christ, as the result of believing God's testimony. This is the whole thing. This is

saving faith, whereof it is written, "He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true."

Faith also promotes holiness. Indeed, faith in operation, as the habit of the soul, is just another way of describing holiness; and when a man shall understand what God has revealed, shall implicitly believe it, and constantly practice it, that will be Christian holiness. This is the goal of the Christian race—towards which we must run with perseverance incited by the great cloud of witnesses who, though tempted like us, are now triumphant, and give the secret of their conquest to us in these words: "This was the victory that overcame the world, even our faith."

"ONE THING THOU LACKEST."

Rev. THOMAS ARMITAGE, D.D.

It were well to compare the inspired narratives from which we derive our theme, "One thing thou lackest," as they are found in Matt. 19: 16–30, Mark 10: 17–31, Luke 18: 18–30. We have here a specific case of inquiry from the Scriptures, of one who takes high rank for purity of character, ingenuousness, frankness, eagerly running to learn the way of eternal life, and as though he were willing to do whatsoever he was told by Jesus to do. His expression showed a great measure of self-satisfaction, which Jesus proceeds to try, by first instancing the commandments of the second table, the inferior requirements of righteousness—not the higher standard—and the man asks for more, with assured readiness to do all; then the crucial test is applied, the test of love to his neighbor, as an expression of perfectness—"Give all to the poor and follow *me*" (the whole law), and Jesus accompanies the demand with the full assurance of blessing—compliance with the man's desire—if he shall fulfil the demand. This proposal goes like a sword's

point to the heart, ambition and desire lapsed in a moment; it was certainly a severe test, but one which the man brought on himself. The Lord but tried him on his own chosen ground, and laying bare his heart, showed him that he was not willing to do as much as he imagined he had already done, or professed himself able to do. This man saw himself as never before. With all his pretences his heart was hard, and money the master of his manhood. The test was fearfully effectual, and the man saw how weak—hopelessly so—he was to keep the commandments. An idol was found enshrined in his heart, showing to the world how hard it is for them who love riches to enter the kingdom. I see no reason why you may not meet with just such a case, and therefore it were wise to look at the principles of Jesus' conduct here.

I. Jesus recognized the presence of covetousness as utterly at variance with the possibility of salvation. Invest a man with money and he will never again be the same man; for it will either refine or deprave him, he may become better, or he may become worse. The money test will gauge the whole man. Put im-

becility upon a throne of gold, and you cannot mistake it for a man; take honesty and worth from a bed of straw, and pile upon them a mountain of gold, and you cannot destroy their sterling virtues and manhood. It was no great thing to ask the man to sell all to gain eternal life, and this is the mammon test of universal entrance into Christ's kingdom. Probe to the core the covetous inquirer with whom you may meet, for in such a one there will be found no love to Christ.

II. The money greed is here shown as radically opposed to the spirit and practice of the gospel. There is no condemnation for the mere possession of wealth, which in some circumstances is by the blessing of God; but greed, the insatiable hunger for, and absorbing delight in, riches, is a terrible sin. In Col. 3 : 5, 6, Paul refers to "covetousness, which is idolatry: for which thing's sake the wrath of God comes on the children of disobedience;" and it is there classed with lewdness, thieving, and drunkenness; with all that dethrones God in man's affections, and it gives to money the faith and hope which the soul should give only to God. So Judas sold his Saviour, soul,

body, divinity, and mediatorship, for the thirty pieces, the price of a slave. And as idolatry was the first sin of the Church in the wilderness, so, also, as exemplified in Ananias and Sapphira, was exhibited as the first recorded sin in the new Church.

III. Greed is the great enemy of the spirit and hope of the gospel. Jesus was tried in this point like as we are. Few had more to do with, or passed more tests in connection with money than Jesus. The gold of the Magi was poured out at His cradle. Judas sold His blood-stained limbs for gold. When He laid in the tomb the soldiers took a bribe of large money to lie concerning His resurrection. Money with its blessing or its curse appears at both ends of His life. Money is made a test of morality, a test of sensuality in the rich fool (Luke 12 : 16), of devotion in the widow with her mites, of the purity of God's house in the upsetting of the tables of the changers, of common humanity and worldliness in Dives and Lazarus. From the mountain-top Satan promised gold to Jesus, among the glories of the world, but He trampled the bribe under His feet; by the piece of money

His enemies tried to entrap Him into treasonable utterance; so too money tested the Lord's piety in the matter of the half-shekel. We have every assurance that He sympathizes with all who are in like manner tempted, that they may be encouraged to carry the weight of this trial to Him who will help them to bear it.

In the inquiry-room keep a sharp watch on the covetous spirit. Treat it lovingly, yet treat it faithfully as did Jesus. Insist on the point of yielding all the heart to Christ.

A WHOLE HEART OR NONE.

Rev. STEPHEN H. TYNG, Jr., D.D.

Our topic presupposes the full reception of all the preceding and preparatory instruction of this course of addresses.

If all this be true of the inquirer, then he is "born again" through the seed of the Word, by the power of the Holy Ghost. He is now a partaker of the Divine nature. Having the Son, he has life. The office of the inquiry worker is now to develop this life into absolute consecration. He is to feed it on the words of Divine truth. He is to free it from unfounded and slavish fears. The relations of this work are indicated in Philippians 2: 12, 13. God has "worked in" the salvation and life. The inquirer is now to "work out," to manifest that which he has already in its beginnings received from God.

This manifestation of the new life of God in the soul of man is Christian consecration. Its secret and source should be very clearly explained to the inquirer. In doing this, I advise the use of Galatians 2: 20, 4: 19; 2 Corinthians 13: 5, emphasizing the fact that

the Person of Christ is declared to be in him. Press this assertion for his acceptance. Show him that the alternative is to be a "reprobate." His faith must say "yes" to this word of God before you can go any farther. Explain that the fact and its realization or enjoyment are two different things. The one may precede the other by a long period. It does so in natural life.

Make the relations of Christian consecration equally clear. Conversion is turning from somewhat. Consecration is turning towards somewhat. The one is the contrast of sin; the other is the opposite of selfishness. Of both these actions the indwelling Christ is the author. He it is who changes the direction of the heart's longing and the life's doings. In Isaiah 1: 16, 17, these two closely connected facts are represented under the expressions "ceasing to do evil" and "learning to do well." They accurately describe each and both. The union of the two in a true Christian experience is as complete as the two sides of the human face: neither is complete without the other; neither is not without the other; neither should be less absolute than

the other. If a partial consecration is sufficient, then an incomplete conversion is adequate. But the new life will brook nothing less than a full surrender of sin and submission of self to Christ. As the new life is developed by its growth in the knowledge of Christ, its loathing of sin will be intensified and its longings for the Lord's honor and glory become more imperative. Therefore your office is to press the fulness of Jesus and to indicate methods by which the quickened life of the soul may express itself.

This assertion of the essential necessity of a complete consecration to Christ will seem to the inquirer in opposition to much that passes current in Christian society and churches. How will you brave the difficulty, because the inquirer is right? The Church just now is in a terribly Laodicean condition. In your effort to lead the inquirer to a full consecration of himself, you will be withstood by all legal forms of teaching, all ceremonialism, and all indolence as he has observed and heard of them in the Church. This is not your concern. Keep to the text of God's Word and you are safe. If you are consciously directed

to it, you can press these passages upon him with no mean emphasis. Let him not shirk behind others. Keep him out in the light.

Equally at war with this view of consecration are the teachings of many who hold to the so-called "higher Christian life." There is no high, higher, nor highest Christian life. The growth of the soul is only in the apprehension of Christ and its corresponding submission to Him. But at all stages in its development, consecration must be complete so far as the inquirer knows himself. This is the instinct of all believers, and not the privilege of the few. Absolute consecration is the essential fact of all Christian life. I have always thought that there was something akin to the Roman Catholic doctrine concerning "works of supererogation" in the unguarded statements of some godly teachers of this school.

If, then, the inquirer regards this obligation as the experience of only a few, and tells you of those in his own family who have not attained it, answer him with the Lord's words. For this purpose I suggest the use of Luke 9: 62; Matt. 10: 37–39. What words more definite than these could have been spoken?

Show him his danger if he hesitates. Point him to the disappointment described in Luke 13 : 26. Warn him that profession is not possession. Not to be recognized by Christ is to be a "worker of iniquity," even though we may have passed peculiar privileges and stations in the Church.

Your whole basis of instruction, always remember, is the fact of the inquirer's possession of an indwelling Christ. Your expectation of success is that as this new life develops it will instinctively assert itself. Doubtless consecration is placed before us, in other scriptures as a claim of God, growing out of the fact of our Lord's redemption. For this refer to 1 Corinthians 6: 20; 7: 23. Far different inferences are here drawn from our purchase by blood. But the particular view of consecration, that I am now pressing, is illustrated in the lives of the early Church. Use Acts 5 : 4; 4 : 32. The Apostle here distinctly tells Ananias and Sapphira that no compulsion had been laid upon them. It was their own voluntary act. And in the second passage the early Christians are reported as not saying any of them "that aught of the things

which he possessed was his own." It was this instinctive consecration which rendered possible the communism of Acts 2: 44–45. In illustration of this necessity of the new nature, and as an adequate expression of its experience, I recall the rule of the Redemptorists. Amidst all their superstitious uses they are said to preserve this daily direction: "Before you begin your work, say, 'All for Thee, O Lord: O my Jesus, all for Thee.'"

To impress upon the inquirer the extent of the consecration expected by the Lord, and the many powers by which the new life can prove itself, are such passages of God's Word as your knowledge of his particular temperament and circumstances indicate to be applicable. For the instinctiveness of consecration you can show none more pointed than 1 Corinthians 6: 20; 1 Thess. 5: 23. How the "whole spirit, soul and body," are in turn mentioned. Thus all inclusive of all that He is, has, and can do. Being, enduring, doing, are the three features of consecration and show them in all their manifold relations. To enter more into detail may in some instances be very needful.

You will find a difference among inquirers. A lively, hearty sort of fellow will come to you, who, perhaps, is intemperate, as certain undeniable facts will show—selfishness will predominate in his nature. With such a one you want to emphasize the Lord's demand for his body as well as his soul. Show to him that the new life must control everything; level your gun and fire point-blank at his rebellious body; tell him (1 Cor. 6 : 13) "Meats for the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them." An indwelling Christ demands a pure body, consecrated body, yielded up, that the Lord may do what He pleases with it, and as long as He pleases. Consider the prayer of the apostle, "I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service" (Rom. 12 : 1) "for as ye have yielded your members servants to uncleanness and to iniquity unto iniquity; even so now yield your members servants to righteousness unto holiness," (Rom. 6 : 19). "Know ye not your bodies are the members of Christ?" (1 Cor. 6 : 15.) To this vital point every seeker must be brought.

Then in regard to the consecration of the mind. "We have the mind of Christ" (1 Cor. 2 : 16), and "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus" (Phil. 2 : 5); also consider the exhortation (1 Pet. 4 : 1), "Forasmuch as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind." We shall have occasion to use this Scripture in our counsel with those tempted to intellectual pride and self-conceits, apply to them this test of the thoughts and intents of the heart: require that their modes of thought, the nature of their desires and aim of purpose shall be subordinated to Christ's mind and precepts, that whatever the Holy Spirit impels man to do, it must be done; that the mind is to be consecrated to the control of the Lord Jesus in all things, and according to His revealed will.

To those who have too much heart, are characteristically loving, demonstrative, whose difficulties lie in the direction of enthusiasm, give instruction of the requirement to "love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind" (Matt. 22 : 37), that all love of every name and nature

must be in and through Jesus Christ, whereby only it can be sanctified, and be well-pleasing to God. Love is of God, and when that love is shed abroad in our hearts, we shall love Him and all His, in the truth, but not with any other love.

There may appear those who are troubled about submitting their will to Christ. This, too, must be consecrated, and brought into subjection, slavery, so to speak, to another, that is Christ. This is not at all impossible if one has the person and power of Christ within; this perfect agency will avail to bring it about. For "he no longer should live the rest of his time in the flesh to the lusts of men, but to the will of God; for the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles" (1 Pet. 4:2, 3); "for if there be first a willing mind it is accepted according to that a man hath" (2 Cor. 8:12), to bear and do what Christ wills.

In regard to consecration of life, we have the example of these of whom it is said, "They first gave their own selves to the Lord" (2 Cor. 8:5); and this they did for the instruction and culture of the Church, to be used, sent in

God's service. And so should all "be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God."

And hereby through this consecration is gotten a grander character than by any other hope, or struggle.

I give you in closing, these lines, which might fitly be used as a form of consecration among "inquirers."

"All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my being's ransomed powers;
All my thoughts, and words, and doings,
All my days, and all my hours,
All for Jesus! all for Jesus!
All my days, and all my hours."

(WINNOWED HYMNS.)

"I WANT TO BE BETTER BEFORE COMING."

REV. GEORGE H. HEPWORTH.

MANY an inquirer can give no better answer to the invitation to come to Christ than "I want to be better before coming." Such a one stands as Elisha might have stood after the chariot had carried away Elijah, on the farther side of the river, anxious to cross, and afraid to venture, if he had not possessed the miracle-working mantle of the prophet, with which to smite the stream. The fearful and timed inquirer, who hesitates to go on his way rejoicing needs only to have the divine mantle of Christ, and the faith to call upon the God and Father of Christ. Many souls have found just religion enough to make them miserable, but not enough to bring them out of the misery of doubt and fear.

We may divide the class of people of whom we are taking a survey into two parts. *First*, There are some who say they are "not good enough," by way of an excuse from doing the bidding of those who urge them

to press on to Christ; who do not really desire a close and intimate communion with Him, and do not care to put themselves under the restrictions of Christian life. That such as these are sometimes found inside the Church is the result of the too ardent desire of ministers to increase the roll of church membership. They who have never truly known Christ may be wrongly urged to unite with the Church, and if they do comply, they do it as though they were thereby conferring a favor on God. The gospel hope is a grand prerogative to be longed for and enjoyed, rather than a matter for the exercise of a sinner's condescension. It seems in its practical working as if the gospel's large-heartedness stood in the way of its right appreciation. If its privileges were possible only to the few, if a large price were demanded for them, they would be eagerly sought; if every vacant position in Christ's church were to be prayed and paid for, there would never be such an excuse offered as "I want to be better before coming," or, "I am not good enough." But one of the difficulties of ministers in urging the acceptance of the gospel upon the uncon-

verted lies in the absolute, undeniable fact, that the gospel is so large-handed and free to all.

Second, Those who say they are not good enough, and mean it. We should say to all such: "You are quite right; your estimate of yourself is only just; you have made no mistake on this important subject; you are not good enough to enjoy divine privileges, and if your hopes depended on your merit or deserving, you would have no right whatever to reach out for the precious gifts in God's outstretched hand. This plainly appears in the divine illustration of the condemned Pharisee, who, with all his righteousnesses, failed of the justification which rather belonged to the self-abased publican." (Luke 18: 9–14.) With those who so come, under an honest sense of unworthiness, go slowly in the twilight of dawn which has broken upon their spiritual sight. If they are so truly conscious of unworthiness, the hand of the dear Lord will lead them wisely and duly to the light of the perfect day, and bring them at length to the desirable position of the poor publican. Tell such a soul that the true question which stands first before it, is not whether it is good enough, but whether

Christ's invitation includes it. The great question is not in any wise of the soul's merit, but of the scope of the gospel invitation, whether God is good enough to accept it just as it is. Make it plain that whoever must needs keep the law, to find acceptance with God, might as well give up all hope now and forever. Only Christ Jesus ever kept the law, and we can never hope to attain to His standard. Then will arise the eager thought, "How much less than conformity to the standard of the perfect stature of Christ will give me any hope? Is there any invitation which will include me, a sinner; and if so, how shall I accept it?"

No two men ever went through precisely the same experience of sorrow or joy; and so, believing it would be unprofitable, I very seldom attempt to bring my own personal experience to bear on inquirers. I refer every seeking soul to the Word of God, and to that alone; assured as I am that therein will be found a prescription for every known spiritual disease. If that gives not health, then the case is hopeless. From this principle it follows that if the inquirer is not provided

with the medicine which can heal his disease, the teacher is at fault.

You say you think yourself sinful. God entirely agrees with you; and the only difference between your thought and God's, is that He speaks of the whole human race, and you of only your own particular condition. God says, "There is none righteous; no, not one!" (Rom. 3: 10), wherefore you and I stand on the common level of an universal unworthiness, and a complete sense of demerit becomes us. Our disease is like a bad case of leprosy which has covered us from the crown of the head to the soles of the feet. When the seeker shall have come to this sense, then is he on the right road, and until he has come to this sense, there is no point of contact between him and the Holy Ghost of God.

Then say to the inquirer who has recognized this first element of preparation, to find Christ, and walk in Him, if you are to be redeemed, it will not be because you love God, but because, and only because, God loves you. "Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us, and sent His Son to be the propitiation for

our sins." (1 Jno. 4: 10.) "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you." (Jno. 15: 16.) It is enough for you if you have an abiding faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, and so take upon you His sinlessness. You are not the one to choose God, but God is the one to choose you, and you have no right to ask the why and wherefore. You need not be anxious about the largeness of the amount which the note promises to pay, if only the autograph of the Almighty is signed upon its face, or endorsed on its back. Our business is to have no cherished theories of our own, concerning the facts or methods of salvation, but to go to the Bible to find out what God says, and believe and accept that with all the heart.

No matter how much you do, you cannot save yourself. The word is plainly before you for you to believe upon the divine authority: "Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Gal. 2: 16.) Then listening to such words

proceeding out of God's mouth, has "not good enough," anything to do with your acceptance and salvation with Him? The rags of your righteousness (Isa. 64 : 6) are nothing, for the justifying of faith is all, and this only is demanded of you, and this is absolutely required. You cannot get on toward peace with God till you give up all self-righteousness; not till you depend wholly upon the righteousness and faith of Christ. (Jer. 23 : 6.)

"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness"—(1 Jno. 1 : 6.) God requires such a confession from every man; and says, at the lips of Jesus, "Whosoever, therefore, shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven"—(Matt. 10 : 32.) "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shall believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved; for with the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. (Rom. 10 : 9, 10.) So is set forth the desired end of a sinner's hope—righteousness and salvation.

There will be, can be no difficulty in your case if you have the longing to be saved you profess, for here is a short road out of difficulty. You said, "You are not good enough to go to Christ," and I have told you that you spoke the truth; and you cannot be better, for there is no righteousness attainable by you, and the only question before you by any hopeful possibility is: Will God accept you, just as you are? And I insist only that you start for the lowest valley of humiliation, and begin there to go step by step up to the heights of joy and peace in close approach to God; and this you may do through a simple, close-clinging faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. So only will you have reached the foundation truth of Christian character.

SKEPTICAL DIFFICULTIES.

REV. WILLIAM J. TUCKER, D.D.

WE are to bear in mind that the subject before us is not skepticism, but skeptical difficulties.

We are concerned, that is, with skepticism, only as it finds its way into the inquiry-room.

With the great outer skepticism, showing itself in open attack, or in insidious suggestion, or in indifference—creating what Prof. Huxley calls an extra Christian world—we have nothing now to do. It is not our work to encounter skeptics. We are to meet our brother men as they come to us with "eyes holden," that they see not Christ.

Again, we must remember that doubt, as a mental difficulty, is not unbelief, which is sin —as much sin as impurity or greed. "I dare not sin against charity by that hasty solution of a brother's doubts which so easily refers intellectual perplexities to moral declination," are words of true Christian utterance.

Some skepticism may be dishonest, and more may be superficial, but we must be pre-

pared for the highest type. We may find ourselves in the presence of great, honest souls, whose doubts date back of our beliefs. Next to faith, the most solemn thing is doubt.

There must be no rudeness of touch in the inquiry-room. We must approach souls in the love, not of pity, but of respect.

It is important for us to look into the origins of some of the more common types of skepticism, such as produce many of the difficulties we are to meet.

We shall find that with many, doubt has become a habit. The individual mind has caught the habit of the age. Men question, rather than weigh and decide. Everything is an open question, and all things have been reduced to equality; the spiritual to the plane of the material. This habit is a most serious embarrassment to a soul seeking at last to know God, rather than to ask about Him.

Skepticism, with other minds, is the result of partial reading.

The majority take the reading matter which comes to them, borne in upon their minds through the current literature.

This literature leaves deposits of doubt,

which in time accumulate to the displacement of truth. To keep a just balance, the mind must be as well stored with the facts of the spiritual life, as with the facts of the secular life. Facts are as necessary to religion as sentiment.

And very much like this, is the skepticism which comes from large contact with men. The majority read only the current man, as they read only the current book.

We do not study the best lives in business or in the Church. Hence that worst of all doubts—as to the reality of Christian living.

It is so easy to transfer a doubt touching the man who bears the name of Christ, to the truth itself.

Nor can we ignore the fact that something of the skepticism of the time is the result of over or wrong religious training. Many have been trained to believe, more than to think. Beliefs thus formed are disturbed by contact with the world. Things are seen to be non-essential which had been set forth as essential, and yet the mind is in no way qualified to discriminate. And so the very foundations of faith are shaken.

Something of what appears to be the selfish eagerness of Christians to listen to Mr. Moody, bears this charitable construction, that it is the real yearning of unsatisfied believers for a simple faith.

There is one other source which we must not overlook, where a doubt has been harbored to shield a sin. Conscience may at last have thrown off the sin, but the doubt remains. It is not infrequently the case that it is easier to dislodge a given sin, than some of its allies.

How, now, shall we meet those under skeptical difficulties, whatever may have been the origin of their doubts? Certain principles apply in all cases.

First. We must confront all doubt with reality.

Much depends upon the personal bearing of the believer. It is an argument to look upon some faces. Doubt is unrest; faith is repose. Doubt is trouble; faith is peace. All natures in real repose are restful, so Christ said to men, with an infinite meaning, "Come unto me." It was enough to touch His life, for He lived back among the eternal realities. He thought in one world, and spoke in

another. He made men feel the presence of the things of which He testified.

So it will be in our contact with all restless and disturbed minds; we shall give them more out of what we are, than out of what we say. The first step toward the reality of faith is the impression they may receive of the reality of our own faith to us.

Again. We must endeavor, in all ways, to strengthen the spiritual nature which is under the doubt.

What is doubt? What is faith? Faith is the man believing. What is sin? Sin is the man sinning. So, doubt is the man doubting, and we want the man for Christ. If we can reach him, and strengthen his conscience and whole spiritual nature, he will throw off the doubt.

Never argue against a specific doubt, for in so doing, though you may have the weightier argument, you have enlisted the sympathies of the man for the weaker side. You have killed the doubt, perhaps, but you have not saved the man.

It was one method of Christ to confront questioning minds with questions greater than

those they were entertaining: to turn the mind from what was speculative to what was practical. It is possible for us, at times, to apply this method. There are questions to the life, which, rightly put, at once take precedence in the mind.

But the chief ministry which we can render to all doubting souls, is to give them the quickest possible contact with Christ, the living Christ. Not lead them to doctrines about Christ; not now, even to His cross, but to Christ Himself.

There is but one place where the mind in its wearied strivings can find rest, and that is in the presence of Jesus. There faith begins its work. Once with Christ, faith can reveal to a soul its most blessed offices.

Christ Himself is the "door," the "way," the "light." We must let nothing which belongs on the other side, intervene between an inquiring soul and Christ.

"Ye will not come unto me," was the saddest of all the laments of Christ.

And as regards the use of the Bible, we are not to send such an inquirer to the Bible at large. We are to place him rightly in the Bible, that is, somewhere with Christ.

There is a most suggestive expression given in the story of the Eunuch to whom Philip was sent. The place of the Scripture which he read, was this: "He was lead as a lamb to the slaughter." It was easy for Philip to expound that Scripture.

Christ made wonderful concessions to honest doubt. What He denied to Mary in her love, that He gave to Thomas in his doubt. The greater blessing still goes with the ready faith, but the greater proof is still granted to all reluctant minds.

We still have, as I believe, the sweet permission of Christ to say to every honestly doubting soul, as we may lead him into the presence of the crucified One, "Reach hither thy finger and behold the hands: and reach hither thy hand and thrust it into the side, and be not faithless, but believing."

"WAITING FOR THE SPIRIT."

REV. JAMES M. KING.

WHEN John the Baptist came preaching in the Wilderness, the baptism of repentance for the "remission of sins," there was raised great expectation whether he were the Christ; he replied to the inquiries, "I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance, but he that cometh after me is mightier than I. . . . . He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost and with fire." (Matt. 3: 11.) Among the crowds who flocked to John's baptism, was one man of such grace and wisdom that John, at first, was not willing to baptize Him, but He insisted upon being baptized to fulfil all righteousness, and when He was so baptized, the voice from heaven was heard to say, "This is my Beloved Son in whom I am well pleased," and John testified that the heavens were opened before him, and he saw the Spirit of God descend as a dove, and lighting upon Jesus. (Matt. 3: 15–17.) This same Jesus, towards the end of His ministry, spoke of "Another," whom the world could not receive, but the disciples

would know Him, for He would dwell with them, and be in them" (Jno. 14: 16, 17), and who could not come unless Christ first went away from earth; but when He, the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, should come, it would be better for them than if Christ Himself had remained on earth, because the Comforter should convince the world of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment. (Jno. 16: 7, 8.) After thus telling the disciples to expect the coming of such "Another," Jesus laid down His life upon the cross, and after, on His first appearance among the disciples, He breathed on them and said, "Receive ye the Holy Ghost." (Jno. 20: 19–22.) But this was not the "fire;" for before His ascension into heaven, He commanded them to tarry in Jerusalem till they should be endued with power from on high. So they returned from Olivet with joy to await the coming of the Comforter. After waiting ten long days, and while they were in the upper room in prayer, the promise was fulfilled according to the Baptist's testimony. Jesus gave them the baptism of the Holy Ghost and of fire, and to this

agreed Peter's testimony that day. "He hath shed forth this which ye now see and hear." (Acts 2: 33.) When the Holy Ghost came upon them, "suddenly there came a sound from heaven as of a rushing, mighty wind, and it filled all the house where they were sitting, and there appeared unto them cloven tongues as of fire, and it sat upon each of them." (Acts 2: 2, 3.) So was ushered in the new dispensation of the Holy Ghost, and it began with the one hundred and twenty who were watching and praying in an upper room, baptized with His own Spirit.

The Scriptures lead us to the direct conclusion, that the Holy Spirit is the divine agent in the conversion of souls; and that He is around and with us, and that all religious experience is by His immediate operation, and all right influence in the work of revival of religion must be traced to the Holy Ghost as the fountain-head. The new creation is attributed to the Holy Ghost; all the blaze of conviction of sin, and the sorrow following; all the tenderness which persuades to, and gives joy in, the soul's surrender, is the work of the Holy Ghost; He draws us to, and by

Him, we come to, and receive Christ the Saviour. He tells of the divine relationship into which the repentant sinner is brought as a child of the heavenly Father, received into the family of God, and encourages in the soul of man the spirit of sons of God, sets upon it the stamp of Deity, whereby it cries, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8: 15.)

Of course, the repentant sinner drawn by the Spirit, and waiting for a consciousness of the Spirit's presence, desires above all things to know that his relationship is changed and that adoption has taken place. Now, adoption is well defined to be, "a gracious act of God the Father, whereby for the sake of the atonement made by Christ on the cross, and in consideration of faith on the part of His creatures in that atonement, He receives into His family, and admits to all the privileges of His house, those who trust in His Son."

Some of the most patent facts in making up this judgment are: 1st, the obedient spirit has taken the place of rebellion; 2d, conscious liberty from the thraldrom of sin; 3d, a teachable spirit; 4th, a sense of safety; 5th, joy, growing out of the fact that the future

relationship is to be that of a child and not a criminal. I believe the Scriptures prove it to be the privilege of every soul coming to God, to have "a satisfactory and joyful persuasion produced by the Holy Spirit in the mind, that he is now a child of God."

How the Spirit enters man's nature, and leavens his faculties, God has neither revealed, nor does the consciousness inform us. As the workings of God in the processes of nature are incomprehensible, so also are the workings of the Holy Spirit in the heart of man. This very analogy (John 3: 8) Jesus employs as a rebuke to speculation on a subject which to human reason is absolutely mysterious. All efforts to explain away the meaning of Scripture bearing upon this evidence of our relationship to God as children, will but dissipate faith, and lower the ideal of Christian privilege. Let the Lord do His own explaining.

What is it "to wait for the Spirit?" Not to stand in a posture of spiritual curiosity, as waiting for some mysterious, magical token, like the diseased people in the porches of Bethesda. Waiting is not idle endeavor, per-

fectly at our own ease, and neglecting effort and anxiety, not a mere passive attitude of soul, but with the mind set upon a given point, in which expectation is the main-spring. "Meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them," as the mother waits for her loved boy, the maiden for her mistress, the wife for the footsteps of her husband, the merchant for his richly-freighted ships, as the one hundred and twenty waited, praying for that for which they waited.

While the inquirer is taught to wait for the Spirit, he is not to do it without effort on his own part to encourage, to secure the Spirit's coming; but to wait as the mariner waits for the freshening of the breeze by first spreading the sail. It is not waiting for miracles to be wrought, for "the kingdom of heaven comes not with observation." It is not waiting for the noisy cataract, but for the distilling of the life-giving dew. It is not waiting for the lightning flash, but for the morning sun to call the seeds of divine planting into life, and to melt the clouds of darkness into luminous ether. The Spirit is speaking now, not in the roar of thunder, nor in the crash of earth-

quake, but in "the still small voice." Hear Him!

Have the Word of God not only in the head and heart, but also in the hand, and be able to turn to the "thus saith the Lord." The Spirit uses the Word as the instrumental means. The Word makes sin's defilement evident—shows the remedy—urges its adoption—presents powerful motives to the mind. Make yourselves familiar with the passages of Scripture bearing upon the divinity and personality of the Holy Spirit. The inquirer must understand that he is waiting for a real, but invisible personal presence, and not simply for an influence. Pentecost proves the personality and real presence of the Holy Ghost.

The inquirer must understand that the Holy Ghost teaches, seals, comforts, witnesses, and gives power to wait, and power to supplicate.

Inquirers should be warned against resisting, while they imagine they are waiting for the Holy Spirit; to be carefully in an attitude of waiting, and not in fact resisting, hindering, obstructing His work.

The inquirer needs to be impressed with the Father's willingness to give him the Holy

Spirit, as shown in the Lord's declaration—"If ye then being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask Him?" Also make plain the accessibility of the Holy Spirit, that even in the moment of looking, waiting, He is within reach. As Jesus was accessible when here on the earth, so now, and even more, if possible, is the Holy Spirit ready for our need; for Jesus went away that every individual on earth, in every place, might have what they could not, from the very nature of things, have had if we had only the same Jesus, in the body, as our friend here: that is, have Him in all places at once; but now all by the Spirit's presence have God with them and in them.

Inquirers must be given to understand that they are included in the promise of the gift of the Holy Ghost. The preaching of Pentecost was, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord, shall be saved." To receive Him is not an exclusive privilege, and, therefore, all need to pray, and to confidently wait for the gift. And we must so wait in prayer as we are taught by John (1 Epis. 5 : 14), "this is the

confidence that we have in Him, that if we ask anything according to His will, He heareth us," which anchors our confidence to the all-sufficing dispensation of the Holy Ghost. Show them that their anxiety on account of sin is, according to the promise of John 16 : 8, proof of the Holy Ghost's work in their hearts now, and they are not far from the kingdom of heaven; an assurance that the truth, which the Holy Ghost only can effectually use, has made some impress on the soul, but that it cannot be made durable, permanent, till the Spirit so fixes it. Unless so fixed, it will be as the early efforts of Daugerre, who vainly labored to retain the image upon the sensitive plate of the camera. But the Holy Spirit's power will effectually operate upon their now sensitive hearts, else all the past and present results will be in vain. Let him tarry in the darkened room of penitence until the divine chemical power fixes the truth upon the heart's tablet. And now, dear fellow-laborer, let us think on our own preparation for the inquiry-room. The most important work of a revival is done there. Conversions are not often made in the great congregation; the

contest, hand to hand, with sin, is a personal encounter, which is best ended with the sword of the Spirit unsheathed. The Pentecostal experience is our best example; there we find no listlessness, but all were united in expectation, and continued in prayer: the apostles waiting for the power to come, and which did not come on them till the spirit of worldliness, and the lust of earthly glory and praise, indicated by longings for a temporal kingdom of Messiah, were burned out of their hearts. Then let us tarry in the upper room of consecration, till the fire qualifies us to help men, and when we come out of the upper chamber, inquirers will not wait long to say, "God is indeed here;" and "I believe in the Holy Ghost." Then will we be found in the spiritual frame to yearn over the impenitent, and to use with unwonted power and point the sword of the Spirit as was done at Pentecost. We need to know that though revelation is ended, inspiration is not. Though once God revealed Himself by the voice, by the flame, by vision, in the cloud, through the vail of flesh, now He dwells in man, and is made known by the tongue of flame on the

humble brow of each of those who have His Spirit, and He enthrones Himself on human hearts. We must have the Holy Spirit, or we can do no work that will stand. We can only work for God when the Holy Spirit shines in our own souls, and upon the soul of the man we seek to have saved.

There is a picture hanging in one of the galleries of Europe, which represents a prisoner confined in his cell under religious persecution. He is chiselling out with rude implements (a rough piece of iron for his chisel, and a block of wood for his mallet,) upon the stone wall of his cell, a picture of Christ on the cross. The light of the sun only shines in, an hour or two each day, so that he can see to work. The rest of the time it is dark and he cannot work. So we can only work when the Holy Spirit, the divine illuminator, is present. Then only can we carve the image of Christ crucified upon stony hearts. Our implements may be rude, but if the image is that of Christ crucified, and the Spirit does shine, the work will stand.

"Grant this, O holy God and true:
The ancient seers Thou didst inspire,—
To us perform the promise due,—
Descend, and crown us now with fire."

"I HAVE NO FEELING."

REV. THOS. S. HASTINGS, D.D.

WE hear these words as a common form of complaint, or as an excuse for not laying hold of Christ. We meet those who are anxious because they are not sufficiently anxious, and some who would by this plea throw the responsibility of their continued impenitence upon God. Some there are who are hoping to escape the wrench and struggle of surrendering the world, and submitting to Christ by some flood-tide of feeling which will float them into the haven of rest and peace.

Men indeed are prompted to inquiry after the truth by different motives; but we may be certain that none who make this complaint are wholly devoid of anxious feeling; they have all the feeling they wish, and yet they may have a large measure of faith. There is always a singular disproportion between what we believe and the feelings we experience; none of us feel as we should the majesty and magnificence of the grand truths of the kingdom of Christ; or the pathos and power of the

cross; or the claims of the love "which passeth knowledge." Therefore we are not to be surprised at the want of feeling in inquirers.

There are some general principles which should be stated before turning to the more directly practical part of this subject.

1st. Feelings are not primary nor independent states of the mind; but only secondary, resulting from, or attending upon, the exertion of faculty, or the stirring of capacity. There must first be knowledge, then the feeling stirred by that knowledge; the relation between them being that of cause and effect; but between these two a variety of circumstances may intervene to disturb the just influence of the given cause. We need to teach the inquirer that feeling is a secondary matter, a mere surface matter, and not permanent and abiding. Mysticism gives the precedence to feeling and not to truth; but this reverses the order of nature. It is the work of the Holy Spirit to touch and kindle the heart into right feeling through the quickened perception of the truth.

2d. Nothing could be further from the truth than that ebullient feeling is a main part of re-

ligion. Repentance, faith, love, hope, gratitude, joy—these are the constituent elements of religious experience. It cannot be questioned that there are feelings of penitence faith, love, hope, gratitude, and joy; but there are also fixed principles or states of the soul from which these corresponding feelings come. A distinguished writer of our time says: "Love is not a mere sentiment or casual emotion, but it is the man's settled affinity—it is that which is to his character what the magnetic force is to the needle—the power that adjusts all his aims and works, and practically determines the man." This remark applies also more or less to each of the elements of religious experience just specified; they are all primarily states or principles, and only secondarily feelings.

3d. A fact should here be noticed whose practical bearing will be sufficiently apparent. As Christian principles strengthen, the feelings related to them become (ordinarily) less and less vivid and demonstrative, and the work of the Christian life is motived more and more by settled convictions. Henry Rogers says, "He who feels poignantly (I do not say deeply, but

poignantly), the distress which he relieves is a novice in benevolence." The deep nature does quietly that which the shallow nature is only excited about, but does not accomplish.

Before passing to the more practical illustration of my subject, I wish it understood that I would by no means discredit the value and power of Christian feeling. God forbid! We should feel, and feel deeply. Christian enthusiasm is noble and we need far more of it. It has been said that the head gives artillery, but the heart powder "for life's daily battle." There are two classes of Christians, those who live by emotional impulses, and those who are controlled by the steady movement of principles firmly imbedded in the soul; the one is like the packet ship which goes out to sea, liable to be becalmed, or to be driven out of its course by adverse winds; but the other is like the steamer which, in spite of calm or tempest, is driven by the might of the powerful engine that is within, and moves ever straight onward, even in the face and teeth of the wind; and yet the steamer does not fail when the day is propitious to

make use of the sails which she has ever ready to be spread to the winds.

There will be found two classes of inquirers who will say, "I have no feeling"—the unconverted and the converted.

I. There will be those who at some former period, perhaps in early life, passed through one or more revivals, in which they were to some degree impressed with the truth, and who yet bear the scars—hard and callous—of that experience; and now they desire and expect once more to feel as they formerly did; but this is unreasonable, and we should urge them to forget the things which are behind, and to reach forth to those which are before. Tell them they do not need, and cannot have again, the same experiences; they themselves are not now the same persons they were; they need only Jesus Christ.

II. Again, there are those who say, "I cannot feel," who have been religiously educated, and who from their childhood have been familiar with the great truths of our holy religion, and have schooled themselves to resist the claims of those truths; they do not feel, because they have trained themselves not to

feel; but they must now act upon their convictions of the truth. Their deadness of heart is the fruit and penalty of a violated education.

III. And there are those who have formed vague notions of what they may expect to feel if they become Christians, which notions they have derived from reading religious books: I mean religious biographies, with the diaries of those who were eminently religious. These books, in their descriptions of experience, are often abnormally colored. By such reading many inquirers unconsciously set for themselves a standard to which they expect to attain. Tell them they must look away from all human standards; they have not yet been in a position to comprehend the descriptions of religious feeling which they have read. Bring them back to the simple New Testament direction, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

IV. There will be some morbid, diseased natures who have the chronic habit of looking within themselves, studying their feeling, or want of feeling; they have become dissatisfied, despondent, and miserable. These people

should be reminded that we are counseled and commanded of God to "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1 : 29), to live by "looking unto Jesus"—*i. e.*, we are to look away from self, and to look to Christ the only Saviour.

To all who come to us with this common complaint, we should say: "Feeling cannot save you! Only Jesus Christ can do that!" Tell them that if their feelings were even superlatively great, high, earnest, elevating, yet they would none the less need to go to Jesus to save their souls, and trust in Him entirely to deliver them from sin and death. When you find men desiring and waiting for deep convictions of sin, tell them that these often come later in the order of Christian experience. So President Edwards, in his later history, testified: "I have had a vastly greater sense of my wickedness and the badness of my heart, than ever I had before conversion." The late Dr. Spencer said to a man who came to him complaining of the want of feeling: "Your heart cannot feel at your bidding." "What then can I do?" said the man. "Come to Christ now," was the reply; "we want

faith only, not feeling to bring us to Christ." Dr. Spencer then made these five points:

1. "The Bible never tells you that you must feel; but that you must repent and believe."

2. "Your complaint that you can't feel, is just an excuse by which your wicked heart would justify you for not coming to Christ now."

3. "This complaint that you can't feel, is the complaint of a self-righteous spirit, because you look to the desired feeling to commend you to God, or to make you fit to come, or to enable you to come."

4. "Your complaint is the language of the most profound ignorance. To feel would do you no good; devils feel; lost spirits feel."

5. "Your complaint that you can't feel tends to lead you to a false religion—a religion of mere self-righteous feeling. Religion is duty."

The man said, "But, sir, there is feeling in religion!" "But," said his teacher, "there is duty in religion, and which shall come first? You ought to feel: you ought to love God, and to grieve that you are so senseless a sinner." That man soon found his Saviour.

There are those who are at heart Christians who also are tempted to say, "I have no feeling." I have deep sympathy with such; they have proved the hardest cases to deal with in all my experience as a pastor. They have heard so much of delightful Christian experiences that they watch, and pray, and wait for the same ecstatic joy; and burdened by this anxiety they make it impossible for the coveted joy to come to them. They are too much given to introspection. The attempt to feel thoughts and to comprehend feelings is the shortest way to insanity. It is exceedingly difficult to deal with such cases, whose malady has taken a chronic form. While the Gospel is calling to them to look up to Jesus, they look only down into themselves, and their miseries become deeper and deeper. For any man in the inquirer's or Christian's state of anxiety to attempt to feel out all their thoughts, and to comprehend all their feelings, is one of the best roads to insanity.

My pastoral experience has brought me many such cases. One such was a woman, whose sad and gloomy face was often before me in my study, and whom I fully believed to

be a Christian, but she thought herself going to hell. I urged her to go out and try to win one soul to Christ, as it was then a time of revival in the neighborhood; she would have drawn back, but I insisted on the plea of her conscientious duty. She engaged, and successfully, in this endeavor, and I heard no more of her troubles. She found joy and peace as soon as she ceased nervously to look for them, and make that her great business.

I had another case whose symptoms were the same, but the person had not the nerve to use the above remedy. I said, "What would satisfy you that you are Christ's?" She said, "If I could only feel such joy as Christians experience, I would be satisfied I was changed in heart." My reply was: "Go home and thank God that He has not given you that joy, for you would have trusted in that for salvation and not Christ." She next day returned to me rejoicing. I once had a case of inherited melancholy, exhibiting intense morbidness, and all my talk was to no purpose. I then tried Dr. Finney's method with a similar case, who went to the individual, saying, "I have come to bid you good-bye; I have too

much to do on my hands to look after you any further; but first, I would like to know what you are going to do?" He received answer, "I shall try to serve God," "What then?" "Try to keep on all my life serving God." "What then?" "I shall die." "Then?" "I shall go to hell." "What then?" "I shall try to serve God in hell." To this last Dr. Finney said: "My friend, the devil won't have you there!—he'll turn you out!" After a moment's perplexity she said: "I see it all! I see it all!" and went away rejoicing.

In your coming work, dear friends, exalt and honor Jesus Christ. Trust not to your own wisdom, skill, tact, but only to the Holy Spirit, and you will be successful.

SCRIPTURAL EVIDENCES OF CONVERSION.

Rev. A. D. VAIL, D.D.

The true conversion of a sinful soul must ever be one of the grandest proofs of the divine origin and life of Christianity. So long as God gives to the world frequent illustrations of the power of converting grace, no form of popular or scientific skepticism can make way against the appeals of the word of God. Genuine conversions are the true fruits of a living Church, and that Church is most thoroughly apostolic and divine which, like the tree of life, bears continual fruitage through all months and thus glorifies God.

It is a question of great importance, what constitutes true scriptural conversion. Surely there must be some great misconception on the part of multitudes, either as to the nature of conversion or as to the fact of their own salvation. Our Churches during revivals are like the orchards of the Spring-time, full of the blossoms of hope and promise, while the

autumn often brings little perfect fruit. Many who profess conversion soon fall back, and hundreds who crowd our inquiry-rooms fail to go further, and stop short of conversion. Where shall we look for the cause of failure? The answer will not be uniform, for it sometimes happens that conversion takes on the type and character of the denominational peculiarities of the Church, or of the revival, where the man has been led to Christ. There is one great and true standard, one and one only test, for all Churches and for all souls, the Word of God.

Let us first consider the scriptural use of the word conversion. The precise word is not often found in the Bible, but the great root idea of it runs through the Scriptures. Conversion means a turning around, and the Greek word is sometimes translated turn, as "a great number believed and turned unto the Lord." (Acts 11: 21.) The idea is of a soul going away from God, and under the divine persuasion turning around and walking in the opposite way, walking with God. "Turn Thou me and I shall be turned." (Jer. 31: 18.) "Therefore turn thou to thy

God." (Hos. 12: 6.) "They that turn many to righteousness." (Dan. 12: 3.) In every case where the word conversion is used, there is implied the turning around in the life, as "Except ye be converted and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Mat. 18: 3.) "Repent ye therefore, and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3: 19.) "To open their eyes and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God." (Acts 26: 18.) These passages, in a general way, indicate the scriptural idea of conversion.

But to give us further and fuller light of what is implied, we have recorded in the Scripture the conversions of several individuals. Each of these is a study, and they seem to be type cases of the various ways in which different men are led to Christ, and of the various feelings that accompany different cases of conversion. The cases are recorded somewhat at length, and in one or other of these you may find a picture of your own conversion. Zaccheus, (Luke 19: 1–10.) Saul of Tarsus, (Acts 9: 3–18; 22: 6–16; 26: 15

–18.) The Philippian jailor (Acts 16: 23–34.) Cornelius, (Acts 10.) The Ethiopian eunuch, (Acts 8: 26–40.) Lydia, (Acts 16: 13–15.)

Let us now search the Word of God for a full and clear statement of what is implied in conversion. Let us consider different illustrations of conversions, and then discover, if we can, the great and essential facts in each example. It is called "The power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." (Rom. 1: 16.) "Neither is there salvation in any other, for there is none other name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved." (Acts 4: 12.) Here the idea is of one delivered from a great peril and made safe, the radical idea of salvation. Again, "Ye who sometime were far off, are made nigh by the blood of Christ." (Eph. 2: 13.) "Now, therefore, ye are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and of the household of God." (Eph. 2: 19.) Here is an entire change in the relations of the soul to God. Again, "Awake thou that sleepest and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." (Eph. 5: 14) "And you hath he quickened who were dead

in trespasses and sins." (Eph. 2 : 1.) This implies a wonderful change, and such as could only be wrought by God. But to what life are we raised? We are "born of the Spirit." (John 3 : 8.) We become "the sons of God," "which were born not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." (John 1 : 12, 13.) We become new creatures, "old things are passed away; behold all things are become new." (2 Cor. 5 : 17.) Here we have the passages that set forth most clearly the nature of conversion, and give us its essential elements.

It will be found that there are two great ideas implied in conversion. (1.) The pardon of the sinner. (2.) The great change of the sinner's nature that we call regeneration, or "the new heart" (Ezek. 36 : 26), or "the new man" (Eph. 4 : 24; Col. 3 : 10). The sinner stands condemned before God, and he cannot become a child of God until his sins are forgiven. Hence we find God declaring His willingness to "blot out our transgressions." (Is. 43 : 25), "to remove our transgressions from us, as far as the east is from the west" (Ps. 103 : 12). "The Lord, the Lord God, merciful

and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth, keeping mercy for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin." (Ex. 34:6, 7). And now we find that the New Testament urges the idea of repentance for sin, and connects pardon with repentance. "Repent ye, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2). "Repent ye therefore and be converted that your sins may be blotted out." (Acts 3:19; Mark 1:14, 15; Acts 2:37, 38). And when the sinner is pardoned he is said to be "justified." "Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5:1). "Being justified freely by His grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24). This pardon, then, is freely given to us of God, through faith in Jesus Christ. "For by grace are ye saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God." (Eph. 2:8).

By the free grace of God the sinner is forgiven. But for all this, he will at once fall into his old sins, and that continually, unless God shall work some great change in the sinner's nature, so that he will come to hate sin

and love righteousness. This change is the second factor of conversion. "For in Christ Jesus neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature." (Gal. 6:15). "Therefore if any man be in Christ he is a new creature." (2 Cor. 5:17). "A new heart also will I give you and a new spirit will I put within you. And I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you and cause you to walk in my statutes." (Ezek. 36:26, 27; Col. 1:13, 14; 2:13). Sin has now become "exceeding sinful." (Rom. 7:13). "Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin." (1 John 3:9); that is, he does not wilfully and knowingly disobey God. Thus do we find that the idea of conversion implies (1) the pardon of the sinner, an act that passes in the mind of God; and (2) regeneration, a result wrought in the sinner's nature by the power of God. Or, as St. Paul combines the ideas, "Who hath delivered us from the power of darkness and hath translated us into the kingdom of His dear Son; in whom we have redemption through His blood even the forgiveness of sins." (Col. 1:13, 14).

This work is represented as a real and thorough one. When God forgives the sinner, it is done fully and at once. It is an entire washing away of guilt, "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as white as snow" (Isa. 1 : 18); "the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin." (1 John 1 : 7). So, too, the work of regeneration is a real and full work. We who are dead are brought to life; we pass from aliens to full citizens, from enemies to friends. There is a real new creation. But we are not born into the maturity of Christian grace and strength. The new-born soul is complete as is a new-born babe, that must grow up "unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." (Eph. 4 : 13). We have the germ of every grace, the possibilities of every virtue, but not the developed holiness of the tried and victorious saint. A "new nature" is enthroned within, and ruling over the "old nature." The new strong currents of the heart set toward God, and the converted man freely and joyously begins to do the will of God.

John Bunyan pictures the pilgrim at the

moment the burden of his sins rolls off, as met by three shining ones who saluted him with "Peace be to thee." "The first said, 'Thy sins be forgiven thee;' the second stripped him of his rags and clothed him with change of raiment." The third gave him a roll with a seal upon it, which he was to look at by the way, and give in at last at the celestial gate. This roll beautifully represents the confidence, the divine assurance given to the convert of his acceptance with God. It seems to be evident from the Word of God, that the Christian has a right to the "assurance of faith." (Heb. 10: 22.) We are exhorted to "make our calling and election sure." (2 Pet. 1: 10.) We are to be "ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you." (1 Pet. 3: 15.) There must be, then, good and scriptural evidences of conversion. What are they?

Having determined what conversion is, it will be a short and easy task to indicate the scriptural evidences of this great change. There are three distinct lines of evidence, either of which ought to be satisfactory. We may not find them all at once in the same indi-

vidual; but they may be found, one to-day, and another to-morrow, for each one implies the others, in the same sense that a part of the spectrum implies the absent colors that belong to the beam of light.

1st. The first line of evidence is the "assurance of faith," or the assurance of our own consciousness that we do deliberately and honestly "believe in the Lord Jesus Christ." We are saved not through our feeling that we are saved, but we "are saved through faith." (Eph. 2: 8.) The soul accepts and rests in the fact of salvation, because God hath said, "He that believeth in the Son hath everlasting life" (John 3: 36), not that he shall feel that he hath everlasting life. (So also John 5: 24 and 6: 47.) "Look unto me and be ye saved . . . for I am God and there is none else." (Isa. 45: 22.) It does not say, Look and you will feel that you are saved, but Look and be saved. Because of the soul's confidence in the Word of God, it comes to such an assurance that "we know that we have eternal life." (1 John 5: 13.) (John 20: 31.) The seeking soul sooner or later comes to see that we are saved when we simply trust in

Christ to save us, but the "full assurance of faith" does not come until we believe in the sincerity and reality of our own belief or faith; then we may "draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith . . . and hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised." (Heb. 10: 22, 23.) "He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself." (1 John 5: 10.) He knows that he has faith.

2d. The second line of scriptural evidence will be found in the witness of the Holy Spirit to the fact of our conversion. "Because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father." (Gal. 4: 6.) "For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God." (Rom. 8: 15, 16.) We understand by the witness of the Spirit, not a spiritual conclusion on our part that we are Christians, but an impression made on our hearts immediately and directly by the Spirit of God, that we are His children. This often

comes in the moment of conversion, and the soul passes at once into a great light and joy. The ground of it is in the feeling of our adoption into the family of God, and we sing:

"My God is reconciled,
His pardoning voice I hear,
He owns me for His child,
I can no longer fear.
With confidence I now draw nigh,
And Father, Abba, Father, cry.

This divine impression of the Spirit is elsewhere called the "earnest of the Spirit." (2 Cor. 5: 5.) "After that ye believed, ye were sealed with that Holy Spirit of promise." (Eph. 1: 13.) (2 Cor. 1: 22.) The incoming of this glorious experience is one of the sweetest and most satisfying that is given to the child of God. This earnest of the Spirit is the first installment of that confidence and joy which we now have as the sons of God, whose glorious reflection shall come, when "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is." (1 John 3: 1, 2.)

3d. The third line of evidence of our conversion will be found in those passages

that speak of the fruits of the Spirit. We find in our hearts new feelings, and a disposition to new activities, "the first fruits of the Spirit." (Rom. 8 : 23.) These are "love, joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5 : 22, 23.) These fruits are evidence that the soul has been grafted into the living One, Christ Jesus. "He that abideth in me and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit, for without me ye can do nothing." (John 15 : 5.) The pardoned sinner is delivered from "the fear of death." (Heb. 2 : 15.) His sense of guilt is removed and there is "now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 8 : 1.) He has "peace with God" (Rom. 5 : 1), for he is no longer fighting against God. He has "the peace of God," for the Saviour says, "My peace I give unto you." (John 14 : 27.) He has "light in the Lord." (Eph. 5 : 8.) He has now a new joy, "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ." (Rom. 5 : 11.) He "rejoices in hope of the glory of God." (Rom. 5 : 2.) He has "joy and peace in believing," (Rom. 15 : 13,) and sometimes he is able to "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of

glory." (1 Pet. 1 : 8.) He is conscious of being "led by the Spirit of God, and so is a son of God." (Rom. 8 : 14.) He now delights in the Word of God, and the book has, for the first time, a divine charm, and as a "new-born babe," he desires "the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may grow thereby." (1 Peter 2 : 2.) He is sure that he "knows" God, because he "keeps his commandments." (1 John 2 : 3.) He has an entirely new feeling toward Christians, and now loves communion with them ; and he rejoices to "know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." (1 John 3 : 14.) And now God has given him "a good hope." (2 Thes. 2 : 16.) His "hope maketh not ashamed." (Rom. 5 : 5.) He "rejoices in hope." (Heb. 3 : 6.) He has Christ within, "the hope of glory." (Col. 1 : 27.) His hope is "as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast." (Heb. 6 : 19.) These are the evidences given to the believer that he is in Christ, and that Christ liveth and abideth in him.

There is great reason to fear that many do not give to the scriptural evidences of conversion that importance which they deserve. Chris-

tians are so anxious to lead men into the Church, that they seek to comfort those whom God hath not comforted, and to persuade them that they are converted when they have not even sincerely repented of their sins. As a result, there are many in our churches who are not in Christ. They have trusted in partial and insufficient evidences of conversion. They have repented, but not with a godly sorrow. They have had conviction of sin, but they have not forsaken all of their sins. They have reformed their outward life, but there has been no heart-cleansing. They have been "seekers," but they have never "found" salvation. They have received the sacraments, but they have never received Christ. These are men like Bunyan's Formalist, who, "in order to make a short cut of it, climb over the wall," instead of coming in by the more difficult gate of repentance. They say we have plenty of "custom" for that way of getting in. And "if we are in, we are in." Alas, for the thousands who are led astray by the example of Formalist, and who have come to doubt the reality of genuine conversion.

On the other hand, there are some sincere

souls that have evidences that are sufficient; but they are not satisfying. They do not lack any essential scriptural evidence, but they have not had 'an experience like some dear Christian friend.' They have had no deep sorrow, no awful sense of sin before coming to Christ. Neither did Zaccheus or the Ethiopian Eunuch. There has been no very great change in their outward life. But they were like the young man whom Jesus loved, that lacked only one thing, and that was in his heart rather than life. There has been no great upheaval of soul as in Saul and the Philippian jailor. But Lydia and the Eunuch were not so brought into the Kingdom. They have never known any sudden answer of prayer, and they cannot point to the hour or day when they were converted. What matters it, so long as the Sun of Righteousness has risen upon us, and we are walking in the light! Their feelings are inconstant and often sad. But to be a Christian is to serve God, and to love Christ is to keep His commandments, without regard to our feelings. They cannot forget their past sins. But the truest penitence follows conversion, and we see the 'exceeding sinful-

ness" of our pardoned sins. Timid, doubting souls should rest in the fruits of the Spirit as all-sufficient evidence of their conversion.

Assurance, confidence in God and in our conversion, is the privilege of believers. We are strong and happy and useful as we believe that we are the sons of God. "These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye have eternal life." (1 John 5 : 13.) "For I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day." (2 Tim. 2 : 12.) (Rom. 8 : 38, 39.)

"WHAT GOOD WORKS CAN I DO?"

REV. THOMAS D. ANDERSON, D.D.

IN John 6: 28, 29, we read, "Then said they unto Him, What shall we do that we might work the works of God? Jesus answered and said unto them, This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent."

Accepting this question as sincerely asked, we are guided by Him in our treatment of persons who meet us with the same inquiry and in the same spirit. In such a spirit we should believe the question to be asked us, unless there shall be evidence to the contrary. In this light we do not so much consider the words, "What good works can I do?" as uttering an objection, as that they voice an anxious perplexity of the aroused soul. They give expression rather to a state of mind which, unless scripturally guided, may result in wrong views, than to thoughts which have already crystalized into error.

Guided by the example of Christ himself, we will be careful, first, that while guarding

against one error we do not inculcate its opposite. In no case must the sinner under the influence of the Holy Spirit be remanded to the inactivity of death. He must not be made to feel that indifference is duty. Nor must the throbbings of conviction in an intelligent and free spirit be mocked by the false demand for mere passivity. While the Divine Spirit is stimulating the soul to the exercise of all its powers let no one dare to drug it with the fatal opiate, "You can do nothing." Remember the Spirit effects regeneration in our world through convictions of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment, and in response to the earnest cry of the convicted, "What must I do?" has He in no instance inspired the injunction, "Do nothing."

Turn with me in proof to four instances—Acts 2:38: "Peter said unto them (the inquirers on the day of Pentecost), Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." Acts 16:29: Paul and Silas reply to the agitated jailer in the Philippian prison, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be

saved." Acts 9 : 6: "And he (Saul) trembling and astonished said, Lord what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise and go into the city and it shall be told thee what thou must do." In the passage we have already read, and from which more especially we are taking our lesson from the great Teacher himself—"Jesus said unto them, This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." He thus preserves what is true in the consciousness which asks the question by retaining in His answer the word "work." There is a work which lays out no performances, discards all human services, and is absolutely devoid of merit, yet enlists every exercise of the mind, and concentrates all the force of the will. The soul is not reduced to inaction, it lies not in a torpor, but kindled by the quickening power of the Holy Ghost, conscious of new impressions, swayed by divine motives, with desire at its utmost tension, the will regnant, and self forever abandoned, it falls into the arms of the Saviour with the significant cry, "Lord, I believe."

We are taught by these words of Jesus not

merely how to guard the inquirer from error, but also how to guide him unto the truth. "This is the work of God that ye believe on Him whom He hath sent." In this answer we see that "work" and "faith" are made synonymous, and we are thus assured of the only sense in which "doing" and "work" are applicable to the doing or effort of the awakened sinner. Belief or trust in Christ removes the ground of a sinner's salvation entirely out of himself. This settles definitely this point. He can depend on nothing for his justification that originates within himself, or of which he is in any way a part. The object of his confidence is another. The work which secures his release from condemnation is the work of another. The merit that atones for his sin belongs solely to Jesus. All is finished, and can be neither increased nor diminished by anything the sinner can do or leave undone.

Again, this salvation can avail for the sinner only through faith; whatever, then, lessens the necessity of, or interferes with, faith, endangers his salvation. Every attempt to make himself better because he regards himself too sinful to be saved by Christ, under-

values the sufficiency of Redemption, and so weakens confidence. The employment of the means of grace, such as reading the Bible, prayer, and meditation as a moral preparation, detracts from the glory of Christ as a Saviour to the uttermost, and thus despoils faith. All outward submission to gospel ordinances, formal connection with a church, all vows and fastings, and mortifications of the flesh before exercising, or in lieu of, simple faith, are not only hindrances to conversion, but tend directly to resist the Spirit, who is commissioned to take only the things of Jesus and show them unto us.

The exercise of the sinner seeking his salvation is the exercise of trust in Jesus. His only work is to abandon self, to disown as utterly sinful all his efforts at reform, to refuse as blasphemous every attempt to make himself worthy of the divine favor, to decline the sacerdotal mediation of a human priesthood, to conform to no external ritual of preparation, and in his actual, present state of sin and wretchedness to flee to the refuge of the "Cleft Rock" saying:

> "In my hands no price I bring,
> Simply to Thy Cross I cling."

Some, however, may be represented by this inquiry who are really troubled with erroneous views. They may have an impression, more or less distinct, that something is required of them before conversion to make their character more acceptable to God, or in some way to atone for their sin. Such should be taught that both for character and pardon they must depend on "Jesus only." Christ is qualified for being a Redeemer by His divine holiness. Because "in Him is no sin;" He is the Beloved of the Father. The guilty can be accepted before God only in the person and character of their substitute. If any virtue of theirs were required to be added, from their nature it could be only imperfect, thus the whole substitution would be impaired. Therefore it is indispensable that Christ's perfect obedience must be left unmarred by the addition of any claim of merit or virtue in the sinner.

The same line of thought is applicable to the other error, that the sinner by good works can make some atonement for his sins. The efficacy of Christ's propitiation is owing to the sinlessness of His person. Without sin,

He was absolutely without condemnation. Within the infinitude of His holy nature as God and man, He could receive and (allow the expression) exhaust the penalty due for transgression. If now to avail himself of this propitiation the guilty be required to add something himself, then that which were added, from the nature of atonement, must be of the same infinite purity. But this by the very terms of the statement is impossible, for the guilty cannot do what is holy. To attempt, then, to make some atonement for his own sins instead of lightening the sinner's burden, only vitiates in his estimation the all-sufficiency of Christ and thus he deprives himself of his only hope—denying its sufficiency.

How important to bring to bear on this class of inquirers such passages of Scripture as express the alone efficacy of Christ's righteousness, and that pardon can come only by the death of Jesus. The Holy Spirit presents the true character of our own good works in the language of Isa. 64 : 6 : "All our righteousnesses are as filthy rags." The ground of salvation is explicitly stated in Titus 3 : 5 : "Not by works of righteousness which we

have done, but according to His mercy He saved us." In Phil. 3:9, we ascertain that the sinner's only glory, as well as safety, is to "be found in Him not having mine (his) own righteousness, which is of the law, but that which is through the faith of Christ, the righteousness which is of God by faith." Very clearly in Rom. 4:5, is simple faith set forth as the only requirement of the sinner: "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him who justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness." With reference to pardon, we read in Col. 1:14, "In whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins." Again in 1 John 1:7: "And the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin."

Lastly, let me commend to your special study and use that grand statement contained in Rom. 3:25, 26, 28: "Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in His blood to declare His righteousness for the remission (passing over) of sins that are past through the forbearance of God. To declare, I say, at this time His righteousness: that He might be just, and the Justifier of Him that

believeth in Jesus. Therefore we conclude, that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

Finally, if any through temptation or wilfulness still insist on the necessity that they should do something, that shall make them more acceptable, before coming to Christ, they should be shown the utter hopelessness in which the impossibility of accomplishing it leaves them. Neither their state of mind nor their objection makes human argument with them proper. The authority of God's own words should be hurled, in all their naked force, against this stronghold of unbelief. When the awakened soul, under the unequivocal declaration of divine truth, is made to feel the absolute despair of his condition, he will flee from his false refuge to the arms of Jesus. Let the words of Rom. 8: 7, 8, ring in his ears: "The carnal mind is enmity against God: it is not subject to the law of God, neither indeed can be; so then they that are in the flesh cannot please God" and the ground sinks beneath him! He must escape or be lost.

Every act by which the unregenerate man

delays his coming to Christ is but an additional sin, enhancing the divine displeasure. God commands but one thing. With this only is He pleased. To it alone has He appended His promise of pardon. "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ." Up to this point, do what he may, the sinner is unforgiven. But when he casts himself on the Crucified, saying,

> "Just as I am, and waiting not
> To rid my soul of one dark blot,"

then, although his "sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool." (Isa. 1 : 18.)

A time will come for his "good works," when his salvation is secured by Christ through faith, with no admixture of human merit; when having past from death unto life he stands complete in Jesus; when the grace of the Holy Spirit flows through his regenerated affections and will, then, and only then, will his gratitude find expression in the services of love. "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man

should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2: 8, 9, 10.)

IMPORTANCE OF CHURCH-MEMBERSHIP.

REV. HOWARD CROSBY, D.D.

IF Paul counted himself happy when standing in the presence of King Agrippa, because he was able intelligently to judge of the matter spoken of by the apostle, so am I most happy to come before you as a body of Christian workers, to present my views of this subject, knowing that you are not unfamiliar with its important bearing on the work in which we are about to engage.

By Church-membership I mean a formal and visible connection with an organized body of Christian believers; (not with an organized Church, which is an important distinction.) If we could imagine a Church constituted in any large measure of notorious blacklegs, we would not desire young converts to connect themselves therewith. The same argument obtains, of course with less of power, should we decline to recommend the young convert to unite with any corrupt Church;

therefore I define a Church in the view of our subject, to be an organized body of Christian believers. In so saying, I do not advise you to introduce into the inquiry-room the question of denominationalism, though you may have your own views on that subject, for if ever Satan appeared as an angel of light, then has it been in the midst of the excitement engendered by the spirit of denominationalism, doing more to thwart the great cause of Christ, and the prosperity of His kingdom among men by sectarian dissension and difference, than ever he did by the management of any boldly-pronounced opposition to the true Church. Any organization of those holding the faith of Jesus Christ as the Son of God is a Church in the sense in which I present this word to you to-night; and it is our duty to advise all converts to connect themselves with some organized Church.

We will find converted persons presenting to us a variety of difficulties which they entertain on this point, not rightly discriminating between the duty of joining the Church, and of seeking conversion. Pastors often have

such an experience in talking with those who do not join the Church. The answers such give to the inquiry why they are not Church members, are various, but not wise. In countries where there is a State Church, and where, at a certain age, all persons are brought into Church-membership, the work of the Holy Spirit, in converting the soul, is confounded, very naturally, with the process by which such persons are brought into the Church. Some years since a Greek monk came to connect himself with my Church, to whom I was obliged to say, "You have not the first idea of repentance, and of a change of heart." "Why!" he exclaimed, "I do my *μετάνοια* (change of heart) every morning and evening," meaning that he said his "Our Father" twice daily. It were strange indeed if here in the heart of a Christian population, where Church-going is an immemorial custom, and a pure gospel is preached, people were to make such a mistake, or exhibit such ignorance, and consider simple Church connection and the approach to the Lord's table tantamount to the great moral step out of unbelief into faith, out of self and into Christ.

Suppose the inquirer were to say to you, "I grant that Church-membership is a good thing, but cannot a man be a Christian without it?" Of course one could be a man even if he were without hands and feet, but such is not a desirable style of manhood; a monk in his cell on the mountain, may be a Christian, but he is a poor sort of one; and such are not examples of the Christian according to the type set forth in the Word of God. Faith in Christ Jesus only is requisite for membership in His visible Church, and nothing may be added to that as the simple condition. But the same scriptures say, "Add to your faith" (2 Pet. 1: 5,) and then comes a long catalogue of graces, and the first named is "virtue," that is strength of Christian character, and the only way any one can become a strong Christian, and be assured of a true spiritual manhood, is by union with his fellows; and so only can a converted person make his Christianity properly tell for Jesus by standing firm in the heavenly phalanx, and moving onward with it against the common enemy, There are always some stragglers with an army but they add nothing to its efficiency, and a

man fighting on his own hook, independently, does not do as much for the cause he espouses as though he fought under the eye and word of the commander in the ranks of the regulated army. A negative and a positive scripture come to our hand at this point; the negative is: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers, for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" (2 Cor. 6: 14). If one is a believer he should live like believers, join himself to them, or else he will become like the unbelievers with whom he is associated. The positive Scripture is this: "Let us consider one another to provoke unto love and good works, not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together as the manner of some is," (Heb. 10: 24, 25); this does not mean the coming together without organization as a mob, but in an *εκκλησία*, which means an organized assembly, a visibly working Church. Present to the inquirer this command of God, that the question is one of duty, not an option, and the Master has by His word laid on His saved one this obligation, which no one can safely

slight. It is only in the path of obedience that we can expect to receive a blessing. God gives peculiar grace in connection with each act of obedience, and the necessity of Church-membership is a principle of His gracious government.

What is to be gained by Church-membership? 1. The Church member has a safe-guard which can be had in no other way; out of the Church (though a believer), he is identified with unbelievers, and it were natural for him to gravitate to their ways; his love to Christ will grow cold, and his constant communication with merely moral, refined, unchristian, worldly minds is full of deceitful and insidious snares to his soul; and the more moral such association may be, the more fatal are its dangers; for he will be less and less on his guard against the spirit of unbelief. He will mingle with the world without speaking of his Christian hope, and then come to the neglect of the thought of Jesus, and finally abandon his Saviour who found him in sin and released him from the chains which he has again sought. Church-membership is a safe-guard;

but it is not a perfect one, for if I want to go to the theatre, or lead a life of frivolity and gaiety, I can quote the example of hundreds of mere Church members.

Another reason: 2. In Church-membership the soul finds strong encouragement to spiritual growth, to grow into the mighty advantages Christ redeemed it to obtain. Away from these encouragements the spiritual life will become more or less withered, instead of being luxuriant, tropical; we might say, without the advantages offered in the Church the soul's growth will be a sorry one, perhaps a backward one; and it will find the duties of a Christian, instead of promoting its highest enjoyment, a weariness and a burden, and find itself, in spite of all its doctrines, a laboring legalist, instead of being a strong, bright, triumphant Christian. This were the natural result of so keeping oneself separate from the organized Church.

Another reason: 3. Not only that the believer may grow in joyful experiences, (and Christian life is brimful of these, God be praised!) but he will be able as in no other way to fight the common enemy of God and

souls. A mere independent fighter in the great battle, attempting a guerrilla warfare single-handed, will find more than his match in the ever-wary and watchful enemy, by whom he will soon be picked up and carried off a helpless prisoner. Only in the regular line of battle can he expect success, where the assurance of the very tread of faithful comrades on either side will be his incentive to noble doing.

You can show the inquirer the protection he needs and the power of piety he must exercise, and which are possible for him to acquire only as he obeys the commands of the Lord Jesus, and as he binds himself to the life and the work of His people.

I have only one other thought to lay before you to-night, for I must necessarily be brief.

This point has relation to the real cause of objection to a union with the visible Church, lying in the minds of many, and hidden from themselves. They do not desire openly to take their stand for Jesus because they love the world, and this secret impulse is the true source of all the excuses already suggested. The real difficulty is not intellectual or spir-

itual, but that the heart is still rebellious. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2 : 15.) The reason for not joining the Church is dishonest, is not sincere; but, thereby, the inquirer is seeking a pretext to remain unconverted. While seeking the spiritual consolation and hope of a Christian, he is conjuring up a device to avoid his responsibilities. Such an inquirer once sent for me: a modest, quiet young lady, under a strong impulse to seek her Saviour. I found her much agitated in regard to her salvation, so that she could not think of anything else. I tried to fathom her difficulties by a series of questions, which, in military phrase, might be called "skirmishing," and at length discovered the trouble. She was a beautiful dancer, and extremely fond of the practice; this was the goddess set up and worshipped; she was serving the world in that particular form. I said, "My child, you will never find peace in Jesus till you are ready for His sake to give up dancing." (I would not have you suppose I consider this a rule for universal observance, any more than that other, "Sell all that thou hast and give to

the poor;" but here it evidently applied, it was, as I said, "give up your dance or die.") It seemed as if all the devils in hell inspired that young soul, as after a moment of terrible suspense, she said: "If my choice must be between Jesus Christ and my dancing, I'll take the dance, and let Jesus go!" She was bold enough to face and assume the responsibility, which so many who profess to seek Christ would shirk and evade. But I must not close without giving you the sequel to this experience. I went home and prayed for that soul, and in my weekly prayer-meeting which was in the evening of the same day, I spoke of this scene, and asked that her case might be made a subject of earnest prayer, and that prayer for her would be continued at the home altars of my people. In two weeks from that time, the subject of our prayers was rejoicing in Jesus, and she has lived to faithfully serve her Master.

MOTIVE POWER OF THE CHRISTIAN LIFE.

REV. R. S. MACARTHUR.

YOU were startled when you heard Dr. Crosby speak of the case of that young girl. I have known a case very like it, where the love of money was the trap laid by Satan for an immortal soul. The man, under my demands to forsake this idol, asked for a week in which to make a final decision; at the week's end he came to me under an evident, but suppressed, excitement, and with a dread calmness communicated his decision: "I will hold on to my money till death; and if Jesus and heaven must go, then they must go!" O how much men need the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit.

In my remarks this evening on "Motive Power of the Christian Life," I shall not distinguish between the motives which should induce persons to become Christians, and those which should induce Christians to labor

for the conversion of others. Substantially the same motives should affect both.

I. We need to have some proper conception of the value of a human soul. This conception may be obtained from a variety of considerations. The value of the soul is seen in what it has accomplished. All that is great in science and art, in literature and sculpture, is but an embodiment and actualization of the thoughts that dwell in the human soul. The sublime songs of the old heathen poets, the majestic strains of Milton in "Paradise Lost," and the sad sighings of England's laureate in the "In Memoriam," are but the mirrored thoughts of their deepest souls. The creations of the genius of an Angelo or Raphael, the immortal symphonies of a Handel and a Mozart, are but the varied language of the God-given soul. Mr. Spurgeon has called the stars God's brilliant thoughts, and the flowers His beautiful thoughts. We may say with literal truth, that the whole world was once a thought of God. He spoke, and that thought was embodied in the physical creation. The engine that thunders across the plain, harnessed to its freighted cars, was once

a human thought. We might particularize the inventions and mechanical arts, and all the forces which have made the civilization of the world great, and we should find that all are realizations of thoughts born in the human soul. Is not that which has accomplished so much, that which distinguishes us from lower orders of creation, and which binds us to angels and God, of infinite value? What a motive we have here to labor for the salvation of the soul.

Let us pass from what the soul has done to what it is in itself: immortal. The Creator is greater than the creature; the soul is more than its own creations. The immortality of the soul is taught in the Old Testament Scriptures. Many passages teach clearly that body and soul are separated at death, each returning whence it came. But if there be found any vagueness in the teachings of the Old, all disappears before the noon-day brightness of the New Testament revelation. "The testimony of our Lord . . . is now made manifest by the appearing of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who hath abolished death, and hath brought life and immortality to light through

the Gospel." (2 Tim. 1 : 8, 10.) This doctrine is not here taught as a new doctrine; but new light from the Son of Righteousness is poured upon this glorious old doctrine. This revelation complements the judgments of the universal consciousness of mankind. However much men in all ages of the world's history may have differed on other points of religious belief, they have agreed with remarkable unanimity as to the immortality of the soul. The subtle Greek, immersed in the abstractions of philosophy; the haughty Roman, on the field of battle; the gloomy Norseman, plundering his neighbors; all the nations of the East, whether worshipping the sun, or idols made by their own hands; the American Indian, roaming his native forests, all believed in the immortality of the soul. They differed widely, it is true, as to the manner of the soul's existence, but all agreed as to the fact of that existence. How can we account for the existence of this universal belief, except on the hypothesis of the existence of the fact so universally believed? There is a secret voice whispering in all our souls that we are immortal. We are all conscious of "a pleasing hope, a

fond desire, a longing after immortality." The Scriptures recognize and endorse these deep longings and lofty aspirations of our inmost being.

Take into simple consideration the wondrous fact that men are immortal. It may be that God himself—we speak it reverently—cannot, certain it is that He will not, annihilate a moral being. How glorious, and yet how terrible, is the truth that we can never die!—that the soul is forever beyond the reach of death. Its cold hand cannot touch it. It smiles at the assassin's dagger, defies the marksman's bullet, and amid the crash of worlds, lives on and on, immortal as its Divine author! Who can estimate the value of a human soul? Ten thousand worlds could not compensate for its loss. Surely they that win it are wise. They shall indeed "shine as the brightness of the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever" (Dan. 12 : 3). Take these considerations into your thoughts when you approach a man to talk to him about becoming a Christian.

Again, think of what Christ has done for the soul, that you may have a higher concep-

tion of its worth. The attainment of great ends necessitates the use of great means. The wise business man will put no more capital into any given enterprise than is requisite for the accomplishment of the end he has in view. The able general will not expose to death the lives of ten thousand men if with five thousand he knows he can overcome the enemy. Nature puts forth no more energy than the case requires. She does not expend in producing a blade of grass the forces necessary for the production of an oak. We may be sure that God would not employ for the salvation of the soul any means not absolutely necessary to that end. He never miscalculates. If any being of less merit could have saved man, Christ would not have died. The resources of the universe were at God's command. The cattle on a thousand hills, the gold and the silver, are His: all could not purchase a single soul. The wealth of heaven was subject to His will. But all the angels, in their matchless splendor and peerless glory, were not able to redeem a lost child of Adam. We are appalled; our reason staggers; we cannot compute such values; we have no

formula by which to discover this unknown quantity—the value of a soul. God knows it. Christ gave Himself. Only the blood of Him who knew no sin, the blood of the Son of God, was able to make that purchase. The soul, though fallen, is glorious in its ruins. The image of God, though defaced, is not entirely effaced. Standing beneath the cross on which dies the Son of God, we learn as nowhere else the value of the soul. Michael Angelo, passing along the narrow street, beheld an angel in a block of marble which lay half imbedded in the mire; but, in the most abject child of Adam, God sees a "pearl of great price,"—a price so unspeakably great that to redeem it He gave His only begotten Son. What a mighty motive in Christian labor is the unspeakable value of a human soul!

II. Only as a man becomes a Christian does he attain the highest possibility of manhood. Until then, no man truly lives. He only exists. Mere existence is only the animal side of true living. True living is the Godlike side of being. To live is more than to be. "Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life" (John 5:40), said Christ. It

is said of the Prodigal Son: "When he came to himself, he said, . . . I will arise and go to my father." He had not been himself; he had not known his true self until then. He had been beside himself. He had lived only in the lower story of his higher nature. No man comes to his true self till he comes to his heavenly Father. Christ is the complement of every man. Mere earthly good cannot satisfy the human soul. It is our highest glory that nothing short of God Himself can satisfy the longings and aspirations of our deepest nature. A living man must have a living, loving, personal God. As the wise men of the East could not rest till they were against the star, and the star itself stood not still till it came over the place where the Redeemer lay, so the heart cannot rest until it reposes on Christ.

The very derivation of the word *religion*, according to some authorities, is to bind back again. Sin came into the world and separated man from God; Christ came to lead the wandering heart and its wealth of affections back to the Father's home and the Father's heart. A tribe of Indians, according to the

tradition, fled before the prairie fires. They came to a broad river, and having crossed it, the aged chief struck his staff into the ground upon the hill-side beyond, and cried, "A-la-ba-ma!" (Here we rest.) He was mistaken. Hostile tribes followed them. Seeking a home, the aged chief and his followers found a grave. Men seek for rest in earthly good. True rest cannot be found until men obey the voice of Him who said, "Come unto Me"; until we pillow our heads on the bosom of Christ, we can never find our true "A-la-ba-ma." It has been said that if you give a man half of the world, he will cry out for the remaining half. More truly has it been said, that if you give him both halves, he will be still dissatisfied. The heart, if its inarticulate longings be rightly interpreted, voices its deepest yearning in a cry after God. Men strive to silence this cry; they surfeit the body and starve the soul, still it utters its voice and reaches out in despair for something which earth cannot give. Augustine uttered a glorious truth when he said, "Thou, O God, hast made us for Thyself, and there is no repose but with Thee." And when men have

found repose in God they can say with the same warm-hearted writer, "Too late I loved Thee, O Thou Beauty of ancient days, yet ever new! too late I loved Thee!" Ever, ever must it be that the soul shall be dwarfed, unsymmetrical, incomplete, until by a living faith it is united to Christ, its complement, its righteousness, its redemption, its all. What an inspiring motive we have in this consideration to seek this Christ for ourselves, and to lead others to Him!

III. The fear of God is another motive. By fear I do not mean a mere reverential awe, but use the word in its simple sense of wrath impending, and danger to be averted. The present time especially needs the enforcement of this truth. It is doubtless true that at some periods in the history of the Church undue prominence was given to the severer attributes of God. It is equally true that now in many pulpits undue prominence is given to the opposite attributes. The idea of the French, as expressed in the phrase, "*Le bon Dieu*," is too prevalent. According to this conception, God is believed to be pleasantly near when we need Him, and to be conveni-

ently absent when we do not want Him. Much of the maudlin sympathy with crime, and silly sentimentality toward criminals, find their origin in these mistaken notions of God. We must not forget that God is just, and that even in the grandest display of His love, the Cross of Calvary, He has given us an equally grand display of His justice. We are not called upon to apologize for God. We are simply to present Him as He has revealed Himself in His Word. Now, that Word does as certainly speak of the duty of fearing Him as it does of loving Him. It does teach us that there is something more to be dreaded than physical death. Christ knew God, and He also knew man, and He says:

"Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul; but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." (Matt. 10: 28.)

Religion addresses the whole man. Fear is a part of the best manhood. Christ appeals to fear, in the sense in which we use the term, as a motive in religion. The human heart has many doors. Over one is written "Hope;" over another "Reason;" over another "Faith;"

over another "Love;" and over another "Fear." Christ knocks at every door. One man opens to one knock, another to another. "Any means to save some." Christ was the perfect preacher. While He was the most loving, He was also the most severe preacher the world has ever had. No such terrible "woes" ever fell from human lips as were uttered by Christ. They were all the more terrible because baptized in His tears. Even the "sermon on the mount" is inflexible in its justice, and awful in its solemnity. No part of Scripture is more startling, to an impure mind, than that sermon. Surely Christ's view of God, and our relations to Him, is the true view. The apostles followed the example of Christ. Paul wished to be "accursed from Christ" for the sake of his brethren. Even John, the apostle of love, warns and exhorts. You must eliminate large portions of the teaching of Christ and the apostles, if you will take out of the Bible these constant appeals to fear. You will not accuse me of harshness if I urge you to imitate, in this respect, the example of the loving Saviour. I was trained under good old Scotch preaching, and my religious life had

its origin, as I believe that of the majority of Christians has, under the influence of fear. This teaching, in its proper proportions, I still believe to be in harmony with the Word of God. But, although originating in fear, our religious lives have outgrown it. It has done its work. The law was a school-master to bring us to Christ. The "law" and the "Gospel" do not contradict each other. To preach either properly, is to preach the other also. So you step out of the region of fear into that of love. Startled by fear, driven by the "dogs of the law," you have taken refuge in Christ. He has become righteousness and redemption. You see such beauty in Him that you cannot help loving Him. Fear is a low motive, we grant. Burns was right when he said, "The fear of hell is the hangman's whip." Better have that fear, however, than to sleep on in sin. The mature Christian is not conscious of the fear of hell as a motive; indeed, he is not conscious of the glory of heaven as a motive. He has outgrown both. Christ is to him the "King in His beauty." He loves Jesus for what He is, apart from what He does. That is right. We all ought

to strive for this state of mind and heart. It is heaven to be like Christ and to be with Him; it is hell to be sinful and to be separated from Him. The school-boy who wishes to speak correctly must fear to violate the rules of grammar; after a time these rules become incorporated into his intellectual nature, and intuitively he speaks correctly. Out of the fear of rules he has passed into the love of correct speech. The man who has climbed a tree can afford to kick away the ladder; but the ladder, nevertheless, served a very useful purpose. So with fear. It is not the end in religion, it is only the means to that end. Let us not strive to be wiser than Christ. He was the best teacher of His own religion. He warned earnestly because He loved tenderly. In our desire to exhibit the love of God in Christ, let us not hesitate to present also, in its proper place and proportion, this element of fear.

IV. I bring you as a final thought that which is suggested by the Apostle's words: "The love of Christ constraineth us" (2 Cor. 5 : 14). This motive gave to the world Peter and Paul, John and James, Luther and Bun-

yan, Wesley and Whitefield. Among all the motives to the Christian life, there is none so powerful as this. Under its inspiration the redeemed soul rejoices amid the flames, and goes up to the glory of its reward. The Christian must have in him the love of Christ. He must live with Christ, walk with Him, and talk with Him. He must know Him by a personal experience, and an appropriating faith. It will not do for him to hold Christianity as a theory; he must feel it in his deepest heart, and illustrate its spirit even in his unconscious acts. The best evidence of Christianity is Christianity. It simply asks the opportunity to reveal itself. If displayed in all the energy of its divine self-assertion, it needs no other evidence. If Christians are "living epistles," the glory of Christ will be seen, and the attractive power of His cross will be felt.

There is no magnetism so mighty as the attractive power of an uplifted Christ. His love should glow in the believer's face, flash in the glance of his eyes, and flow out in the forms of his daily speech. Men will then take knowledge of Christians that they have been

with Jesus, and the irresistible eloquence of a pure and beautiful life will emphasize the words they utter. When men so live with Christ, they become the natural channels of communicating His love to other hearts. Above all personal considerations, above all denominational divisions, let the love of Christ possess our whole being, and then can we with joy and success point sinners to Jesus. Let this be the master-motive. Let this be the crowning impulse of the heart. Let all I have said condense itself into this, and we shall see glorious results from the efforts put forth. And may the Spirit of God come down sweetly and mightily into our hearts, and the work of the Lord abundantly prosper in our hands!

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